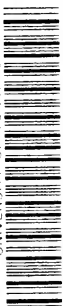


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SKETCHES OF THE HISTORY

OF

LITERATURE AND LEARNING  
IN ENGLAND

FROM

THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO THE ACCESSION  
OF ELIZABETH.

WITH SPECIMENS OF THE PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

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By GEO. L. CRAIK, M.A.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IT is hoped that the survey of our early literature contained in these volumes, notwithstanding many defects in the execution, may be found useful, and may be received with some degree of favour, as offering the only account yet drawn up which aims at taking a complete view of what has been done in the illustration of this interesting subject down to the present day. Ever since the first publication of Bishop Percy's 'Reliques,' nearly eighty years ago, the study of our ancient English poetry has engaged a large share of attention; and, if Percy, Warton, and Tyrwhitt still remain, in every sense, our first names in that department of learning, in respect at least of the number of the followers whom their example has produced there has been nothing to complain of. Undoubtedly, also, much new light has been thrown upon portions of the subject by the improved archæological scholarship of recent times. But our oldest poetry is not English, but French; and, as such, it has of late greatly interested and occupied our neighbours across the Channel, of whose literature it is the root and beginning in a stricter and more exclusive sense than it is of our own. Both Tyrwhitt and Warton had long ago pointed out the obligations of our earliest English poets to their predecessors who wrote in French; but it was reserved for the late Abbé de

la Rue to show that these French *trouveurs* were in fact almost all of them natives of or residents in England, and wrote not for a French, but for an English public, as well as to institute the first comprehensive investigation into their productions and merits. Since he thus led the way, a crowd of his countrymen have given themselves with abundance of zeal, and more or less of ability and accomplishment, to the same line of inquiry. Most of their labours will be found to be noticed in the following compendium. Then, again, there are our numerous old monkish chronicles written in Latin—the great sources of our national history, and also of much of our legendary literature; they have of late years, after a period of neglect, come to attract much attention; and we have endeavoured to indicate everything of importance that has been done, by improved editions of some, and by the printing of others for the first time, either to restore and elucidate them, or to make them better known and more accessible.

It only remains to be added that some portions of what is now before the reader have already appeared in the ‘*Pictorial History of England* ;’ but in the main the present is a new work.

G. L. C.

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# INTRODUCTION.

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## THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

OUR literature does not, any more than our laws and our political institutions, begin with the Norman Conquest, but they and it alike received from that event a new impulse, a new life and direction, and the better part of the colour and character they have ever since preserved. Whatever of our literature precedes the Conquest is a root hidden under the earth; the majestic tree, as it exists above ground, and is a visible thing, has all sprung up since that date. In other words, the Saxon literature and language are rather to be accounted among the sources than as a part of the English, to which they have hardly in truth a closer relationship than the old Latin has to the modern Italian. The Saxon and English are two distinct languages, although the one is in part formed from the other: they are as distinct as the English and French, or the English and German. In the present survey, therefore, such literary remains as have come down to us from the times before the invasion of the Normans may be disposed of in a very brief retrospect.

The space of about a thousand years, extending from the overthrow of the Western Roman empire, in the middle of the fifth century, to that of the Eastern, in the

middle of the fifteenth, may be divided into two nearly equal parts ; the first of which may be considered as that of the gradual decline, the second as that of the gradual revival of letters. The first of these periods, coming down to the close of the tenth century, nearly corresponds with that of the Saxon domination in England. In Europe generally, throughout this long space of time, we perceive the intellectual darkness, notwithstanding some brief and partial revivals, deepening more and more on the whole, as in the natural day the grey of evening passes into the gloom of midnight. The Latin learning, properly so called, may be regarded as terminating with Boethius, who wrote in the early part of the sixth century. The Latin language, however, continued to be used in literary compositions, as well as in the services of the Church, both in our own country and in the other parts of Europe that had composed the old empire of Rome.

When the South of Britain became a part of the Roman empire, the inhabitants, at least of the towns, both adopted generally the Latin language and applied themselves to the study of the Latin literature and art. The diffusion among them of this new taste was one of the first means employed by their politic conquerors, as soon as they had fairly established themselves in the island, to rivet their dominion. A more efficacious they could not have devised ; and, happily, it was also the best fitted to turn their subjugation into a blessing to the conquered people. Agricola, having spent the first year of his administration in establishing in the province the order and tranquillity which is the first necessity of the social condition, and the indispensable basis of all civilization, did not allow another winter to pass without beginning the

work of thus training up the national mind to a Roman character. Tacitus informs us that he took measures for having the sons of the chiefs educated in the liberal arts, exciting them at the same time by professing to prefer the natural genius of the Britons to the studied acquirements of the Gauls; the effect of which was, that those who lately had disdained to use the Roman tongue, now became ambitious of excelling in eloquence. In later times, schools were no doubt established and maintained in all the principal towns of Roman Britain, as they were throughout the empire in general. There are still extant many imperial edicts relating to these public seminaries, in which privileges are conferred upon the teachers, and regulations laid down as to the manner in which they were to be appointed, the salaries they were to receive, and the branches of learning they were to teach. But no account of the British schools in particular has been preserved. It would appear, however, that, for some time at least, the older schools of Gaul were resorted to by the Britons who pursued the study of the law: Juvenal, who lived in the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, speaks, in one of his Satires, of eloquent Gaul instructing the pleaders of Britain. But even already forensic acquirements must have become very general in the latter country and the surrounding regions, if we may place any reliance on the assertion which he makes in the next line, that in Thule itself people now talked of hiring rhetoricians to manage their causes. Thule, whatever may have been the particular island or country to which that name was given, was the most northern land known to the ancients.

It is somewhat remarkable that while a good many

names of natives of Gaul are recorded in connexion with the last age of Roman literature, scarcely a British name of that period of any literary reputation has been preserved, if we except a few which figure in the history of the Christian church. The poet Ausonius, who flourished in the fourth century, makes frequent mention of a contemporary British writer whom he calls Sylvius Bonus, and whose native name is supposed to have been Coil the Good; but of his works, or even of their titles or subjects, we know nothing. Ausonius, who seems to have entertained strong prejudices against the Britons, speaks of Sylvius with the same animosity as of the rest of his countrymen. Among the early British churchmen the celebrated heresiarch Pelagius and his disciple Celestius belongs to the fifth century. Pelagius, although he has been claimed as a native of South Britain, was more probably, like his disciple Celestius, a Scot; that is to say, a native of Ireland (the only Scotia, or Scotland, of this date). He is said to have been a monk of Bangor; but whether this was the monastery of Bangor in Wales, or that of Bangor, or Banchor, near Carrickfergus in Ireland, has been disputed. Pelagius supported his peculiar opinions with his pen as well as orally; and some controversial writings attributed to him still exist. Until he began to propagate his heretical opinions he appears to have enjoyed the highest esteem of his contemporaries for his moral qualities as well as for talent and eloquence; the extraordinary success with which he diffused his views may suffice to attest his intellectual ability and accomplishments.\* The re-

\* A late writer, who regards Pelagius as having been a Briton, says, in reference to a statement which has been

putation of his disciple Celestius was nearly as great as his own. Many of the followers of the Pelagian heresy indeed styled themselves Celestians. Celestius also appears to have been an Irishman. St. Jerome, the great opponent of him and his master, almost says as much when, in one of his passionate invectives, he calls him a blockhead swollen with Scotch pottage; that is, what we should now call Irish flummery.\* We may quote as a specimen of the eloquence of the age, and also of its most orthodox Christianity, a little more of the “splendid bile” of the learned saint. He goes on to describe Celestius as “a great, corpulent, barking dog, fitter to kick with his heels than to bite with his teeth; a Cerberus, who, with his master Pluto (so Pelagius is designated), deserved to be knocked on the head, and so put to eternal silence.” There still exist some epistles and other works attributed to Celestius, which are believed to be genuine.

To the same century belong the great Apostle of the sometimes made:—“A story circulates, that when he was in Britain he bore the Celtic name of Morgant, now usually curtailed into Morgan. But I am not aware of any authority for it. It has been added that Morgant is an equivalent for Pelagius; which is false, except that *mor* means *the sea*. The etymon of the name *Mor-gant* is *like a hundred*, i. e. himself a host. Mor-gan has been explained Great-Head from the Gaelic, by H. Llwyd, Comment., p. 90. But I rather believe there is no such name. There is no probability of Pelagius having been connected with the mountain Celts.”—*Britannia after the Romans*, vol. ii., 4to., Lond. 1841, p. 75.

\* The original Latin is “Scotorum pultibus prægravatus.”—Vossius, however, in his Dissertation upon Pelagianism, considers the Irish flummery with which Celestius is here said to have been swollen, as meaning the notions of his master Pelagius, and adduces the words as a testimony in favour of the Irish origin of the latter.

Irish, St. Patrick, from whose pen we have the composition styled his Confession ; his friend and fellow-labourer the Irish Bishop Secundinus, of whom there is extant a Latin poem in praise of St. Patrick ; and the poet Sedulius, or Shiel, who, although an Irishman by birth, appears to have resided on the Continent, and whose various works have been repeatedly printed.\* All these wrote only in Latin, although St. Patrick, in his Confession, apologizes for the rudeness of phrase with which he expressed himself in that language, owing to his long habit of speaking Irish.

Gildas, our earliest historian, also wrote in Latin. St. Gildas the Wise, as he is styled, was a son of Caw, prince of Strathclyde, in the capital of which kingdom, the town of Alcluyd, now Dunbarton, he was born, about the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century. Caw was also the father of the famous bard Aneurin ; and one theory, indeed, is that Aneurin and Gildas were the same person. In his youth Gildas is recorded to have gone over to Ireland, and to have studied in the schools of the old national learning that still flourished there ; and, like his brother Aneurin (if Aneurin was his brother), he also commenced his career as a bard, or composer of poetry in his native tongue. He afterwards, however, was converted to Christianity, and became a zealous preacher of his new religion. The greater part of his life he appears to have spent in his native island ; but he at last retired to Armorica, or Little Britain, on the Continent, and died there. He is said to lie buried in the cathedral of Vannes. He is the author of two declamatory effusions—the one entitled a ‘ History of the

\* See an article on Sedulius in Bayle.

Britons,' the other an 'Epistle to the Tyrants of Britain,' which have been often printed. The latest and best edition is that of Mr. Joseph Stevenson, published by the Historical Society: 8vo., Lond., 1838. They consist principally of violent invectives directed both against the Saxons and the author's own countrymen; but they also contain a few historical notices respecting the obscure period to which they relate that are of some value.

The immediate successor of Gildas among our historians is Nennius, said to have been one of the monks of Bangor, from the massacre of whom in 613 he escaped, and to have written his 'History of the Britons' a few years afterwards. His native name is supposed to have been Ninian, and he was, like Gildas, of Welsh or Cumbrian origin. But there is much obscurity and confusion in the accounts we have of Nennius; and it appears to be most probable that there were at least two early historical writers of that name. The author of a late ingenious work, entitled 'Britannia after the Romans,' supposes that the true work of the ancient Nennius only came down to the invasion of Julius Cæsar, and is now lost, although we probably have an abridgment of it in the work published under the name of Nennius, by Gale, in the '*Historiæ Britannicæ, Saxonicæ, Anglo-Danicæ Scriptores Quindecim*' (fol. Oxon. 1691), and commonly referred to as his British History.\* That performance i

\* *Britannia after the Romans*, being an Attempt to illustrate the Religious and Political Revolutions of that Province in the Fifth and succeeding Centuries, vol. i., 4to., Lond. 1836, pp. 21, 22. (Understood to be by the Hon. Algernon Herbert.)

stated, in the preface by the author himself, to have been written in the year 858. A very valuable edition of 'The Historia Brittonum, commonly attributed to Nennius, from a MS. lately discovered in the Library of the Vatican Palace at Rome,' was published in 8vo. at London, in 1819, by the Rev. W. Gunn, B.D., Rector of Irstead, Norfolk; and his greatly improved text has been chiefly followed in a subsequent edition by Mr. Stevenson, published by the Historical Society, 8vo. Lond. 1838.

Contemporary with the original Nennius was the Irish Saint Columbanus, distinguished for his missionary labours among the Gauls and Germans. Columbanus died in 615, at the monastery of Bobbio, in northern Italy, of which he was the founder. "The writings of this eminent man that have come down to us," says the distinguished living historian of Ireland, "display an extensive and various acquaintance not merely with ecclesiastical, but with classical literature. From a passage in his letter to Boniface, it appears that he was acquainted both with the Greek and Hebrew languages; and when it is recollected that he did not leave Ireland till he was nearly fifty years of age, and that his life afterwards was one of constant activity and adventure, the conclusion is obvious that all this knowledge of elegant literature must have been acquired in the schools of his own country. Such a result from a purely Irish education, in the middle of the sixth century, is, it must be owned, not a little remarkable. Among his extant works are some Latin poems, which, though not admissible of course to the honours of comparison with any of the writings of a classic age, shine out in this twilight period of Latin



literature with no ordinary distinction.”\* Another learned Irishman of this age was St. Cumman, the author of an epistle, still extant, addressed to Segienus, abbot of Iona, in defence of the Roman mode of computing Easter, in which he shows a very extensive acquaintance both with the subject of chronology and with the works of the fathers, Greek as well as Latin. “The various learning, indeed,” observes Mr. Moore, “which this curious tract displays, implies such a facility and range of access to books, as proves the libraries of the Irish students, at that period, to have been, for the times in which they lived, extraordinarily well furnished.”† To the Irish scholarship of this age may also be regarded as belonging the two Latin lives of Columba: the first by Cuminius, who succeeded him as abbot of Iona in 657; the second, which is of much greater length, by Adomnan, who succeeded Cuminius in the same office in 679. Both these productions, the second of which in particular is highly curious, have been printed. Their authors, although they resided in one of the North British islands, were probably Irishmen by birth. The school of Iona was at least an Irish foundation.

Of the Latin writers among the Anglo-Saxons, any of whose works remain, the most ancient is Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, and afterwards the first bishop of Sherborn, who died in 709, and has left various writings both in prose and verse. Aldhelm received his education chiefly from Maildulf, Meildulf, or Meldun, an Irishman, the founder of the monastery of Malmesbury, by whom he tells us he was thoroughly instructed both in Latin

\* Moore, *History of Ireland*, i. 267.

† *Ibid.* 273.

and Greek. Among the studies of his after life, he mentions the Roman law, the rules of Latin prosody, arithmetic, astronomy, and astrology. He also wrote a tract on the great scientific question of the age—the proper method of computing Easter. But Aldhelm's favourite subject seems to have been the virtue of virginity, in praise of which he wrote first a copious treatise in prose, and then a long poem. Both these performances have been printed. Aldhelm long enjoyed the highest reputation for learning; but his writings are chiefly remarkable for their elaborately unnatural and fantastic rhetoric. His Latin style bears a strong resemblance to the pedantic English, full of alliteration and all sorts of barbarous quaintness, that was fashionable among our theological writers in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.

But the Anglo-Saxon name most distinguished in literature is that of Beda, or Bede, upon whom the epithet of the "Venerable" has been justly bestowed by the respect and gratitude of posterity. All that Bede has written, like the other works already mentioned, is in Latin. He was born some time between the years 672 and 677, at Jarrow, a village near the mouth of the Tyne, in the county of Durham, and was educated in the neighbouring monastery of Wearmouth, under its successive abbots Benedict and Ceolfrid. He resided here, as he tells us himself, from the age of seven to that of twelve, during which time he applied himself with all diligence, he says, to the meditation of the Scriptures, the observance of regular discipline, and the daily practice of singing in the church. "It was always sweet to me," he adds, "to learn, to teach, and to write." In his nineteenth year he took deacon's orders, and in his thirtieth

he was ordained priest. From this date till his death, in 735, he remained in his monastery, giving up his whole time to study and writing. His chief task was the composition of his celebrated Ecclesiastical History of England, which he brought to a close in his fifty-ninth year. It is our chief original authority for the earlier portion even of the civil history of the Anglo-Saxons. But Bede also wrote many other works, among which he has himself enumerated, in the brief account he gives of his life at the end of his Ecclesiastical History, which has just been quoted, Commentaries on most of the books of the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, two books of Homilies, a Martyrology, a chronological treatise entitled 'On the Six Ages,' a book on orthography, a book on the metrical art, and various other theological and biographical treatises. He likewise composed a book of hymns and another of epigrams. Most of these writings have been preserved, and have been repeatedly printed. The first edition of the Ecclesiastical History appeared at Esling, in Germany, in 1474; and there are three continental editions of the entire works of Bede, each in eight volumes folio, the latest of which was published at Cologne, in 1688. Some additional pieces were published at London in a quarto volume, by Mr. Wharton, in 1693. It appears also, from an interesting account of Bede's last hours, by his pupil, St. Cuthbert, that he was engaged at the time of his death in translating St. John's Gospel into his native tongue. Among his last utterances to his affectionate disciples watching around his bed, were some recitations in the English (that is, the Anglo-Saxon) language :—" For," says the account, " he was very learned in our songs; and, putting his

thoughts into English verse, he spoke it with compunction."

Another celebrated Anglo-Saxon churchman of this age was St. Boniface, originally named Winfrith, who was born in Devonshire about the year 680. Boniface is acknowledged as the Apostle of Germany, in which country he founded various monasteries, and was greatly instrumental in the diffusion both of Christianity and of civilization. He eventually became archbishop of Mentz, and was killed in East Friesland by a band of heathens, in 755. Many of his letters to the popes, to the English bishops, to the kings of France, and to the various Anglo-Saxon kings, still remain, and are printed in the collections entitled *Bibliothecæ Patrum*. We may here also mention another contemporary of Bede's—Eddius, surnamed Stephanus, the author of a Latin life of Bishop Wilfrid. Bede mentions him as the first person who taught singing in the churches of Northumberland.

But at this time, and down to a considerably later date, the chief seat of learning in Christian Europe was Ireland; and the most distinguished scholars who appeared in other countries were either Irishmen or had received their education in Irish schools. We are informed by Bede, that it was customary for the English of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, to retire for study and devotion to Ireland, where, he adds, they were all hospitably received, and supplied gratuitously with food, with books, and with instruction.\* His contemporary, Aldhelm, in a passage in which he labours to exalt the credit of the English scholars, and especially

\* Hist. Eccles. iii. 28.

of his great patrons, Archbishop Theodore and the Abbot Adrian, yet admits that those of Ireland enjoyed the higher reputation, and bears distinct though reluctant testimony to the crowded attendance of her schools. "Why should Ireland," he exclaims, "whither troops of students are daily transported, boast of such unspeakable excellence, as if in the rich soil of England Greek and Roman masters were not to be had to unlock the treasures of divine knowledge? Though Ireland, rich and blooming in scholars, is adorned like the poles of the world with innumerable bright stars, Britain has her radiant sun, her sovereign pontiff Theodore"\* It was during the eighth and the early part of the ninth century that the Irish scholars made the most distinguished figure in foreign countries. Virgilius, the bishop of Salzburg, famous for his assertion of the existence of antipodes, for which he was denounced as a heretic by his British contemporary Boniface, but was not, as is commonly said, deposed by Pope Zachary, his elevation to the bishopric having, on the contrary, taken place some years afterwards, was an Irishman, his native name having been probably Feargil, or Feargal. He died in 784. Of the learned persons who were attached to the court of France in this age by the munificent patronage of Charlemagne, the most eminent were Irish. Such, by birth at least, Alcuin himself, the chief ornament of the imperial court, appears to have been, the oldest accounts designating him a Scot (which then meant an Irishman), although he has himself told us that he received his education at York. Alcuin was appointed by Charlemagne to preside over the seminary established

\* Translated in Moore's Hist. of Ireland, i. 299.

by that emperor, out of which the University of Paris is regarded as having grown. At the same time, his friend and fellow-countryman, Clement, was set over a similar institution in Italy. Somewhat later, we find another eminent Irishman, named Dungal, selected by the Emperor Lothaire I., the grandson of Charlemagne, to superintend the whole system of the Italian universities or public schools. He governed that of Pavia in person; but he is stated to have founded and exercised a general control also over those of Ivrea, of Torino, of Ferno, of Verona, of Vicenza, and of Ciudad del Friuli. Dungal has left various works, which bear honourable testimony both to his scientific and his literary acquirements. A second Irish Sedulius, the author of a prose Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul, also appears to have flourished in the early part of the ninth century. He became bishop of Oretto in Spain; and, besides his Commentary, is the author of a treatise entitled ‘The Concordance of Spain and Hibernia;’ in which he maintains the Irish to be Spaniards by origin, and even asserts their right to be still considered as merely a division of the Spanish nation. Donatus, who was about the same time bishop of Fiesole, in Italy, was also an Irishman. The only piece of his that remains is a short Latin poem in praise of his native country.\*

But the glory of this age of Irish scholarship and genius is the celebrated Joannes Scotus, or Erigena, as he is as frequently designated,—either appellative equally proclaiming his true birth-place. He is supposed to have first made his appearance in France about the year 845, and to have remained in that country till his death,

\* Moore’s Hist. of Ireland, p. 300.

which appears to have taken place before 875. Erigena is the author of a translation from the Greek of certain mystical works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, which he executed at the command of his patron, the French king, Charles the Bald, and also of several original treatises on metaphysics and theology. His productions may be taken as furnishing clear and conclusive evidence that the Greek language was taught at this time in the Irish schools. Mr. Turner has given a short account of his principal work, his *Dialogue de Divisione Naturæ* (On the Division of Nature), which he characterises as “distinguished for its Aristotelian acuteness and extensive information.” In one place “he takes occasion,” it is observed, “to give concise and able definitions of the seven liberal arts, and to express his opinion on the composition of things. In another part he inserts a very elaborate discussion on arithmetic, which he says he had learnt from his infancy. He also details a curious conversation on the elements of things, on the motions of the heavenly bodies, and other topics of astronomy and physiology. Among these he even gives the means of calculating the diameters of the lunar and solar circles. Besides the fathers Austin, the two Gregories, Chrysostom, Basil, Epiphanius, Origen, Jerome, and Ambrosius, of whose works, with the Platonising Dionysius and Maximus, he gives large extracts, he also quotes Virgil, Cicero, Aristotle, Pliny, Plato, and Boethius; he details the opinions of Eratosthenes and of Pythagoras on some astronomical topics; he also cites Martianus Capella. His knowledge of Greek appears almost in every page.”\* The subtle speculations

\* Turner, *Anglo-Sax.* iii. 393.

of Erigena have strongly attracted the notice of the most eminent among the modern inquirers into the history of opinion and of civilization; and the German Tenneman agrees with the French Cousin and Guizot in attributing to them a very extraordinary influence on the philosophy of his own and of succeeding times. To his writings and translations it is thought may be traced the introduction into the theology and metaphysics of Europe of the later Platonism of the Alexandrian school. It is remarkable, as Mr. Moore has observed, that the learned Mosheim had previously shown the study of the scholastic or Aristotelian philosophy to have been also of Irish origin. " 'That the Hibernians,' says that writer, " 'who were called Scots in this [the eighth] century, were lovers of learning, and distinguished themselves in these times of ignorance by the culture of the sciences beyond all the other European nations, travelling through the most distant lands, both with a view to improve and to communicate their knowledge, is a fact with which I have been long acquainted; as we see them in the most authentic records of antiquity discharging, with the highest reputation and applause, the function of doctor in France, Germany, and Italy, both during this and the following century. But that these Hibernians were the first teachers of the scholastic theology in Europe, and so early as the eighth century illustrated the doctrines of religion by the principles of philosophy, I learned but lately.' " \* And then he adduces the proofs that establish his position.

The earliest literature in any of the native languages of the British Islands of which any remains still exist

\* Translated in Moore's *Ireland*, i. 302.



appears to be the Irish. The Irish were probably possessed of the knowledge of letters from a very remote antiquity ; for, although the forms of their present alphabetical characters are Roman, and were probably introduced by St. Patrick, it is very remarkable that the alphabet, in the number and powers of its elements, exactly corresponds with that which Cadmus is recorded to have brought to Greece from Phœnicia. If we may believe the national traditions, and the most ancient existing chronicles, the Irish also possessed a succession of bards from their first settlement in the country ; and the names of some of those that are said to have flourished so early as in the first century of our era are still remembered. But the oldest bardic compositions that have been preserved are of the fifth century. Some fragments of metrical productions to which this date is attributed are found in the old annalists, and more abundant specimens occur in the same records under each of the succeeding centuries. The oldest existing Irish manuscript, however, is believed to be the Psalter of Cashel, a collection of bardic legends, compiled about the end of the ninth century, by Cormac MacCulinan, bishop of Cashel and king of Munster. But the most valuable remains of this period of Irish literature that have come down to us are the various historical records in prose, called the Annals of Tigernach, of the Four Masters of Ulster, and others. The most important of these have been published in the original, and accompanied with Latin translations, in Dr. O'Connor's '*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores Veteres*,' 4 vols. 4to. Buckingham, 1814-1826 ; a splendid monument of the munificence of his grace the late Duke

of Buckingham, at whose expense the work was prepared and printed, and from the treasures of whose library its contents were principally derived. Tigernach, the oldest of these Irish annalists whose works we have in the original form, lived in the latter part of the eleventh century; but both his and the other annals profess, and are believed, to have been compiled from authentic records of much greater antiquity. They form undoubtedly a collection of materials in the highest degree precious for the information they supply with regard to the history both of Ireland and of the other early British kingdoms. These Annals differ wholly in character from the metrical legends of Irish history found in the book of Cashel and in the other later compositions of the bards. They consist of accounts of events related for the most part both with sobriety and precision, and with the careful notation of dates that might be expected from a contemporary and official recorder. They are in all probability, indeed, copies of, or compilations from, public records.\*

Not of such historic importance, but still more curious and interesting in another point of view, are the remains we still possess of the early Welsh literature. The Welsh have no annals to be compared in value with those of the Irish; but some of their Bruts, or chronicles, fabulous as they evidently in great part are, are undoubtedly of considerable antiquity. It is now almost

\* The publication of a continuation of Dr. O'Connor's work, to comprise the Irish Annals from A.D. 1172 to 1639, has recently been announced as to be undertaken by Mr. John O'Donovan, under the auspices of the Irish Archaeological Society.

universally admitted that the famous Latin Chronicle of the Britons, published by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century, is really what it professes to be, at least in the main, a translation from a much older Welsh original. The Chronicle of Tyssilio, who flourished in the seventh century, still exists, and has been published in the original (in the Welsh Archaology), as well as in an English translation, by the Rev. Peter Roberts, 8vo. Lond. 1810. The Laws of Howel Dha, who reigned in South Wales in the early part of the tenth century, have been printed with a Latin translation, by Wotton, in his 'Leges Wallicæ,' fol. 1730 ; and again in the late Record Commission edition of the 'Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales,' by Anewrin Owen, Esq., fol. 1841. They develop a state of society in which many primitive features are strangely mixed up with a general aspect of considerable civilization, and all the order of a well-established political system. Then there are the singular compositions called the Triads, which are enumerations of events or other particulars, bound together in knots of three, by means of some title or general observation—sometimes, it must be confessed, forced and far-fetched enough—under which it is conceived they may all be included. Of the Triads, some are moral, and others historical. The historical are certainly not all ancient ; for they contain allusions to events that took place in the reign of our Edward I. ; but it appears most probable that the form of composition which they exemplify was long in use ; and, if so, the comparatively modern character of some of them does not disprove the antiquity of others. A late writer, who considers them to be a compilation of the thirteenth century, admits that

they “reflect, in a small and moderately faithful mirror, various passages of bardic composition which are lost.”\* The most voluminous of the ancient Welsh remains, however, are the poems of the Bards. The authenticity of these compositions may be considered to be now established, beyond dispute, by the labours of various writers by whom the subject has been recently investigated, and especially by Mr. Turner’s able and elaborate ‘Vindication.’ † The most ancient of them are the poems ascribed to the four bards, Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hen, and Merdhin, or Merlin, the Caledonian, who all appear to have belonged to the sixth century. A few additional pieces have also been preserved of the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, which are printed along with these in the first volume of the ‘Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales,’ 3 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1801. Much of this early Welsh poetry is in a strangely mystical style, and its general spirit is evidently much more Druidical than Christian. The author of ‘Britannia after the Romans’ has endeavoured to show that a partial revival of Druidism was effected in Wales in the sixth century, principally through the efforts of the Bards, whose order had formerly composed so distinguished a part of the Druidical system; and certainly the whole character of this ancient poetry seems strongly to confirm that supposition, which does not, however, rest upon this evidence alone. No existing manuscript of these poems,

\* Britannia after the Romans, p. xiv.

† First published separately in 1803, and since, much enlarged, at the end of the third and subsequent editions of his History of the Anglo-Saxons. See also the Rev. E. Davies’s Celtic Researches, Mr. Probert’s Preface to his edition of Aneurin, and Britannia after the Romans, pp. i.–vi.

we may observe, nor any other Welsh manuscript, appears to be much older than the twelfth century.

As the forms of the Saxon alphabetical characters are the same with those of the Irish, it is probable that it was from Ireland the Saxons derived their first knowledge of letters. There was certainly, however, very little literature in the country before the arrival of Augustin, in the end of the sixth century. Augustin is supposed to have established schools at Canterbury; and, about a quarter of a century afterwards, Sigebert, king of the East Angles, who had spent part of his early life in France, is stated by Bede to have, upon his coming to the throne, founded an institution for the instruction of the youth of his dominions similar to those he had seen abroad. The schools planted by Augustin at Canterbury were afterwards greatly extended and improved by his successor, Archbishop Theodore, who obtained the see in 668. Theodore and his learned friend Adrian, Bede informs us, delivered instructions to crowds of pupils, not only in divinity, but also in astronomy, medicine, arithmetic, and the Greek and Latin languages. Bede states that some of the scholars of these accomplished foreigners were alive in his time, to whom the Greek and Latin were as familiar as their mother tongue. Schools now began to multiply in other parts, and were generally to be found in all the monasteries and at the bishops' seats. Of these episcopal and monastic schools, that founded by Bishop Benedict in his abbey at Wearmouth, where Bede was educated, and that which Archbishop Egbert established at York, where Alcuin studied, were among the most famous. Others of great reputation were superintended by learned teachers from Ireland.

We have already mentioned that of Maildulf at Malmesbury, to which Aldhelm repaired after having studied for some time under Adrian. At Glastonbury also, it is related in one of the ancient lives of St. Dunstan, some Irish ecclesiastics had settled, the books belonging to whom Dunstan is recorded to have diligently studied. The northern parts of the kingdom were indebted for the first light of learning as well as of religion to the missionaries from Iona.

The remains of Anglo-Saxon literature which have come down to us are valuable as monuments of the language on which our existing English is principally formed, and some of them also are of great historical importance, or otherwise interesting for the facts they record. But in an artistic or poetical point of view it is perhaps the poorest literature known. The Metrical Paraphrase of certain parts of Scripture attributed to a writer of the name of Caedmon, and the poem of Beowulf, are almost the only considerable poetical works which the Anglo-Saxons have bequeathed to us; the others are all fragments or short pieces, such as the song of the elder Caedmon in Alfred's Bede, supposed to be of the latter part of the seventh century, and to be the oldest specimen of the language that has been preserved; the Ode on the Victory obtained by King Athelstan over the Danes at Brunanburgh in 938; the Traveller's Song, and a few more. One romance in prose has been discovered, on the famous middle age story of Apollonius of Tyre (the same subject with that of the play of Pericles attributed to Shakspeare), which has been lately printed under the care of Mr. Benjamin Thorpe. Of the other prose remains the most valuable are the frag-

ments of the laws, among which are some of those of Ethelbert, King of Kent, who reigned in the latter part of the sixth and the early part of the seventh century, but evidently reduced to the language of a later era; the Saxon Chronicle, the earlier portion of which is chiefly a compilation from Bede, and which appears to be afterwards a contemporary register of public events down to its termination at the close of the reign of Stephen in 1154; and the various works of King Alfred, which, however, are all only in the main translations from the Latin, though occasionally interspersed with original matter: his Pastoral of Pope Gregory, his Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ (with the verse in some of the copies rendered in metre), his Ecclesiastical History of Bede, and his General History of Orosius. There are also translations of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospels, and other parts of Scripture; numerous homilies and lives of saints, some grammatical treatises, some works on medicine and botany, and various wills and other legal instruments. Most of what is of much value or curiosity in Anglo-Saxon has probably now been committed to the press, considerable attention having been attracted to the language for the last twenty or thirty years, both in this country and in Germany and the North of Europe; whatever remains to be done is likely to be well performed by the recently established Aelfric Society. The Anglo-Saxon language lay almost universally neglected and forgotten even in the country where it had formerly been the speech of the people, till the latter half of the sixteenth century, four hundred years after it had ceased to be spoken, when the study of it was taken up by some of the church re-

formers, who endeavoured thereby to make out that certain of their so-called novel opinions were held by the national church in the times before the Conquest. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the labours of the learned Hickes and others in the next century, it was reserved for the scholars of the present day to institute the first accurate examination of the language in its vocabulary, its dialects, its grammar, its syntax, and its versification. What we call the Anglo-Saxon, it may be observed, appears to have been commonly called by those who spoke it the English language, even from the age of Bede, before whose time the various dialects spoken, when they first came over, by the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, had become completely fused together into what was substantially one tongue, although it was certainly not only spoken but written with dialectic differences in the various parts of the country.

It should seem not to be altogether correct to attribute the decline and extinction of the earliest literary civilization of the Anglo-Saxons wholly to the Danish invasions. The Northmen did not make their appearance till towards the close of the eighth century, nor did their ravages occasion any considerable public alarm till long after the commencement of the ninth; but for a whole century preceding this date, learning in England appears to have been falling into decay. Bede, who died in 735, exactly ninety-seven years before that landing of the Danes in the Isle of Sheppey, in the reign of Egbert, which was followed by incessant attacks of a similar kind, until the fierce marauders at last won for themselves a settlement in the country, is the last name eminent for scholarship that occurs in this portion of the English annals. The



historian William of Malmesbury, indeed, affirms that the death of Bede was fatal to learning in England, and especially to history ; “ insomuch that it may be said,” he adds, writing in the early part of the twelfth century, “ that almost all knowledge of past events was buried in the same grave with him, and hath continued in that condition even to our times.” “ There was not so much as one Englishman,” Malmesbury declares, “ left behind Bede, who emulated the glory which he had acquired by his studies, imitated his example, or pursued the path to knowledge which he had pointed out. A few, indeed, of his successors were good men, and not unlearned, but they generally spent their lives in an inglorious silence ; while the far greater number sunk into sloth and ignorance, until by degrees the love of learning was quite extinguished in this island for a long time.”

The devastations of the Danes completed what had probably been begun by the confusion of the internal dissensions that attended the breaking up of the original system of the heptarchy, and perhaps also by the natural decay of the national spirit among a race long habituated to a stirring and adventurous life, and now left in undisturbed ease and quiet before the spirit of a new and superior activity had been sufficiently diffused among them. Nearly all the monasteries and the schools connected with them throughout the kingdom were either actually laid in ashes by the northern invaders, or were deserted in the general terror and distraction occasioned by their attacks. When Alfred was a young man, about the middle of the ninth century, he could find no masters to instruct him in any of the higher branches of learning ; there were at that time, according to his biographer Asser, few or

none among the West Saxons who had any scholarship, or could so much as read with propriety and ease. The reading of the Latin language is probably what is here alluded to. Alfred has himself stated, in the preface to his translation of Gregory's *Pastorale*, that, though many of the English at his accession could read their native language well enough, the knowledge of the Latin tongue was so much decayed, that there were very few to the south of the Humber who understood the common prayers of the church, or were capable of translating a single sentence of Latin into English; and to the south of the Thames he could not recollect that there was one possessed of this very moderate amount of learning. Contrasting this lamentable state of things with the better days that had gone before, he exclaims, "I wish thee to know that it comes very often into my mind, what wise men there were in England, both laymen and ecclesiastics, and how happy those times were to England! The sacred profession was diligent both to teach and to learn. Men from abroad sought wisdom and learning in this country, though we must now go out of it to obtain knowledge if we should wish to have it."

It was not till he was nearly forty years of age, that Alfred himself commenced his study of the Latin language. Before this, however, and as soon as he had rescued his dominions from the hands of the Danes, and reduced these foreign disturbers to subjection, he had exerted himself with his characteristic activity in bringing about the restoration of letters as well as of peace and order. He had invited to his court all the most learned men he could discover anywhere in his native land, and had even brought over instructors for himself

and his people from other countries. Werfrith, the bishop of Worcester; Ethelstan and Werwulf, two Mercian priests; and Plegmund, also a Mercian, who afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury, were some of the English of whose superior acquirements he thus took advantage. Asser he brought from the western extremity of Wales. Grimbald he obtained from France, having sent an embassy of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and religious laymen, bearing valuable presents to his ecclesiastical superior Fulco, the archbishop of Rheims, to ask permission for the great scholar to be allowed to come to reside in England. And so in other instances, like the bee, looking everywhere for honey, to quote the similitude of his biographer, this admirable prince sought abroad in all directions for the treasure which his own kingdom did not afford.

His labours in translating the various works that have been mentioned above from the Latin, after he had acquired that language, he seems himself to have been half inclined to regard as to be justified only by the low state into which all learning had fallen among his countrymen in his time, and as likely perhaps to be rather of disservice than otherwise to the cause of real scholarship. Reflecting on the erudition which had existed in the country at a former period, and which had made those volumes in the learned languages useful that now lay unopened, "I wondered greatly," he says in the Preface to his translation of the *Pastorale*, "that of those good wise men who were formerly in our nation, and who had all learned fully these books, none would translate any part into their own language; but I soon answered myself, and said, they never thought that men would be so reck-

less, and that learning would be so fallen. They intentionally omitted it, and wished that there should be more wisdom in the land, by many languages being known." He then called to recollection, however, what benefit had been derived by all nations from the translation of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, first into Latin, and then into the various modern tongues; and, "therefore," he concludes, "I think it better, if you think so (he is addressing Wulfsig, the bishop of London), that we also translate some books, the most necessary for all men to know, that we all may know them; and we may do this, with God's help, very easily, if we have peace; so that all the youth that are now in England, who are freemen, and possess sufficient wealth, may for a time apply to no other task till they first well know to read English. Let those learn Latin afterwards, who will know more, and advance to a higher condition." In this wise and benevolent spirit he acted. The old writers seem to state that, besides the translations that have come down to us, he executed many others that are now lost.

It is probable, though there is no sufficient authority for the statement, that Alfred re-established many of the old monastic and episcopal schools in the various parts of the kingdom. Asser expressly mentions that he founded a seminary for the sons of the nobility, to the support of which he devoted no less than an eighth part of his whole revenue. Hither even some noblemen repaired who had far outgrown their youth, but nevertheless had scarcely or not at all begun their acquaintance with books. In another place Asser speaks of this school, to which Alfred is stated to have sent his own son Ethelward, as being attended not only by the sons of almost all the nobility

of the realm, but also by many of the inferior classes. It was provided with several masters. A notion that has been eagerly maintained by some antiquaries is, that this seminary, instituted by Alfred, is to be considered as the foundation of the University of Oxford.

Up to this time absolute illiteracy seems to have been common even among the highest classes of the Anglo-Saxons. We have just seen that, when Alfred established his schools, they were as much needed for the nobility who had reached an advanced or mature age, as for their children; and indeed the scheme of instruction seems to have been intended from the first to embrace the former as well as the latter, for, according to Asser's account, every person of rank or substance who, either from age or want of capacity, was unable to learn to read himself, was compelled to send to school either his son or a kinsman, or, if he had neither, a servant, that he might at least be read to by some one. Anglo-Saxon charters exist, which, instead of the names of the kings, exhibit their marks, used, as it is frankly explained, in consequence of their ignorance of letters.

The measures begun by Alfred for effecting the literary civilization of his subjects were probably pursued under his successors; but the period of the next three quarters of a century, notwithstanding some short intervals of repose, was on the whole too troubled to admit of much attention being given to the carrying out of his plans, or even, it may be apprehended, the maintenance of what he had set up. Dunstan, indeed, during his administration, appears to have exerted himself with zeal in enforcing a higher standard of learning as well as of morals, or of asceticism, among the clergy. But the renewal of the

Danish wars, after the accession of Ethelred, and the state of misery and confusion in which the country was kept from this cause till its conquest by Canute, nearly forty years after, must have again laid in ruins the greater part of its literary as well as ecclesiastical establishments. The concluding portion of the tenth century was thus, probably, a time of as deep intellectual darkness in England as it was throughout most of the rest of Europe. Under Canute, however, who was a wise as well as a powerful sovereign, the schools no doubt rose again and flourished. We have the testimony, so far as it is to be relied upon, of the history attributed to Ingulphus, which professes to be written immediately after the Norman conquest, and the boyhood of the author of which is made to coincide with the early part of the reign of the Confessor, that at that time seminaries of the higher as well as elementary learning existed in England. Ingulphus, according to this account, having been born in the city of London, was first sent to school at Westminster; and from Westminster he proceeded to Oxford, where he studied the Aristotelian philosophy and the rhetorical writings of Cicero. This is the earliest express mention of the University of Oxford, if a passage in Asser's work in which the name occurs be, as is generally supposed, spurious, and if the History passing under his name was really written by Ingulphus.

The studies that were cultivated in those ages were few in number and of very limited scope. Alcuin, in a letter to his patron Charlemagne, has enumerated, in the fantastic rhetoric of the period, the subjects in which he instructed his pupils in the school of St. Martin at Paris. "To some," says he, "I administer the honey of the

sacred writings ; others I try to inebriate with the wine of the ancient classics. I begin the nourishment of some with the apples of grammatical subtlety. I strive to illuminate many by the arrangement of the stars, as from the painted roof of a lofty palace." In plain language, his instructions embraced grammar, the Greek and Latin languages, astronomy, and theology. In the poem in which he gives an account of his own education at York, the same writer informs us that the studies there pursued comprehended, besides grammar, rhetoric, and poetry, "the harmony of the sky, the labour of the sun and moon, the five zones, the seven wandering planets ; the laws, risings, and settings of the stars, and the ærial motions of the sea ; earthquakes ; the nature of man, cattle, birds, and wild beasts, with their various kind and forms ; and the sacred Scriptures."

This poem of Alcuin's is especially interesting for the account it gives us of the contents of the library collected by Archbishop Egbert at York, the benefit of which Alcuin had enjoyed in his early years, and which he seems to speak of in his letter to Charlemagne, already quoted, as far superior to any collection then existing in France. He proposes that some of his pupils should be sent to York to make copies of the manuscripts there for the imperial library at Tours. Among them, he says, were the works of Jerome, Hilary, Ambrose, Austin, Athanasius, Orosius, the Popes Gregory and Leo, Basil, Fulgentius, Cassiodorus, John Chrysostom, Athelmus, Bede, Victorinus, Boethius ; the ancient historical writers, as he calls them, Pompeius (most probably Justin, the epitomizer of the lost Trogus Pompeius), and Pliny ; Aristotle, Cicero ; the later poets Sedulius and Juvencus ;

Alcuin himself, Clement, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator, Fortunatus, and Lactantius (writers of various kinds evidently thus jumbled together to suit the exigencies of the verse); Virgil, Statius, Lucan; the author of the *Ars Grammaticæ*; the grammarians and scholiasts, Probus, Phocas, Donatus, Priscian, and Servius; Entychius; Pompeius (probably Festus) and Commenianus; besides, he adds, many more whom it would be tedious to enumerate. This was certainly a very extraordinary amount of literary treasure to be amassed in one place, and by one man, at a period when books were everywhere so scarce and necessarily bore so high a price. "Towards the close of the seventh century," says Warton, in his *Dissertation on the Introduction of Learning into England*, "even in the Papal library at Rome, the number of books was so inconsiderable that Pope St. Martin requested Sanctamand, Bishop of Maestricht, if possible, to supply this defect from the remotest parts of Germany. In the year 855, Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières in France, sent two of his monks to Pope Benedict the Third, to beg a copy of Cicero de Oratore and Quintilian's Institutes, and some other books: 'for,' says the Abbot, 'although we have part of these books, yet there is no whole or complete copy of them in all France.' Albert, Abbot of Gemblours, who with incredible labour and immense expense had collected a hundred volumes on theological and fifty on profane subjects, imagined he had formed a splendid library. About the year 790 Charlemagne granted an unlimited right of hunting to the Abbot and monks of Sithiu, for making their gloves and girdles of the skins of the deer they killed, and covers for their books. We may imagine that these religionists were



more fond of hunting than of reading. It is certain that they were obliged to hunt before they could read; and, at least, it is probable that under these circumstances, and of such materials, they did not manufacture many volumes. At the beginning of the tenth century books were so scarce in Spain, that one and the same copy of the Bible, St. Jerome's Epistles, and some volumes of ecclesiastical offices and martyrologies often served several different monasteries." \* To these instances we may add what Bede relates in his History of the Abbots of Wearmouth, in which monastery Benedict Biscop, the founder, had, about the end of the seventh century, collected a considerable library, at the cost not only of much money, but also of no little personal exertion, having made five journeys to Rome for the purchase of books, relics, and other furniture and decorations for the establishment. Bede records that Benedict sold one of his volumes, a work on cosmography, to his sovereign, Alfred of Northumberland, for eight hides of land.

\* History of English Poetry, vol. i. p. cviii. (edit. of 1824).

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## BOOK I.

EFFECTS OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST—ARABIC AND  
OTHER NEW LEARNING.

THE Danish Conquest of England, as completed by the accession of Canute, preceded the Norman by exactly half a century, and during the whole of this space, with scarcely any interruption, the country had enjoyed a government which, if not always national, was at least acknowledged and submitted to by the whole nation. The public tranquillity was scarcely disturbed either by attacks from abroad or by domestic commotions. Such of the latter as occurred were either merely local or of very short duration. During this period, therefore, many of the monastic and other schools that had existed in the days of Alfred, Athelstan, and Edgar, had probably been re-established. The more frequent communication with the Continent that began in the reign of the Confessor must also have been favourable to the intellectual advancement of the country. Accordingly, as we have observed in a preceding page, the dawn of the revival of letters in England may be properly dated from about the commencement of the eleventh century.

Still, at the time of the Norman Conquest, there is reason to believe that literature was at a very low ebb in this country. Ordericus Vitalis, almost a contemporary

writer, and himself a native of England, though educated abroad, describes his countrymen generally as having been found by the Normans a rustic and almost illiterate people (*agrestes et pene illiteratos*). The last epithet may be understood as chiefly intended to characterize the clergy, for the great body of the laity at this time were everywhere illiterate. A few years after the Conquest, the king took advantage of the general illiteracy of the Saxon clergy to deprive great numbers of them of their benefices, and to supply their places with foreigners. His real or his only motive for making this substitution may possibly not have been that which he avowed; but he would scarcely have alleged what was notoriously not the fact, even as a pretence. No names eminent for learning, it may be observed, are recorded in this age of the annals of the Saxon church.

The Norman Conquest introduced a new state of things in this as in most other respects. That event made England, as it were, a part of the Continent, where, not long before, a revival of letters had taken place scarcely less remarkable, if we take into consideration the circumstances of the time, than the next great revolution of the same kind in the beginning of the fifteenth century. In France, indeed, the learning that had flourished in the time of Charlemagne had never undergone so great a decay as had befallen that of England since the days of Alfred. The schools planted by Alcuin and the philosophy taught by Erigena had both been perpetuated by a line of the disciples and followers of these distinguished masters, which had never been altogether interrupted. But in the tenth century this learning of the West had met and been intermixed with a

new learning originally from the East, but obtained directly from the Arab conquerors of Spain. The Arabs had first become acquainted with the literature of Greece in the beginning of the eighth century, and it instantly exercised upon their minds an awakening influence of the same powerful kind with that with which it again kindled Europe seven centuries afterwards. One difference, however, between the two cases is very remarkable. The mighty effects that arose out of the second revival of the ancient Greek literature in the modern world were produced almost solely by its eloquence and poetry; but these were precisely the parts of it that were neglected by the Arabs. The Greek books which they sought after with such extraordinary avidity were almost exclusively those that related either to metaphysics and mathematics on the one hand, or to medicine, chemistry; botany, and the other departments of physical knowledge on the other. All Greek works of these descriptions that they could procure they not only translated into their own language, but in course of time illustrated with voluminous commentaries. The prodigious magnitude to which this Arabic literature eventually grew will stagger the reader who has adopted the common notion with regard to what are called the middle or the dark ages. "The royal library of the Fatimites" (sovereigns of Egypt), says Gibbon, "consisted of 100,000 manuscripts, elegantly transcribed and splendidly bound, which were lent, without jealousy or avarice, to the students of Cairo. Yet this collection must appear moderate if we can believe that the Omniades of Spain had formed a library of 600,000 volumes, 44 of which were employed in the mere catalogues. Their capital

Cordova, with the adjacent towns of Malaga, Almeria, and Murcia, had given birth to more than 300 writers, and above 70 public libraries were opened in the cities of the Andalusian kingdom." \* The difficulty we have in conceiving the existence of a state of things such as that here described arises in great part from the circumstance of the entire disappearance now, and for so long a period, of all this Arabic power and splendour from the scene of European affairs. But, long extinct as it has been, the dominion of the Arabs in Europe was no mere momentary blaze. It lasted, with little diminution, for nearly 500 years, a period as long as from the age of Chaucer to the present day, and abundantly sufficient for the growth of a body of literature and science even of the wonderful extent that has been described. At the time of which we are now writing Arabic Spain was the fountainhead of learning in Europe. Thither students were accustomed to repair from every other country to study in the Arabic schools; and many of the teachers in the chief towns of France and Italy had finished their education in these seminaries, and were now diffusing among their countrymen the new knowledge which they had thence acquired. The writings of several of the Greek authors, also, and especially those of Aristotle, had been made generally known to scholars by Latin versions of them made from the Arabic.

There is no trace of this new literature having found its way to England before the Norman Conquest. But that revolution immediately brought it in its train. "The Conqueror himself," observes a writer who has illustrated this subject with a profusion of curious learn-

\* Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp. c. lii.

ing, "patronized and loved letters. He filled the bishoprics and abbacies of England with the most learned of his countrymen, who had been educated at the University of Paris, at that time the most flourishing school in Europe. He placed Lanfranc, abbot of the monastery of St. Stephen at Caen, in the see of Canterbury—an eminent master of logic, the subtleties of which he employed with great dexterity in a famous controversy concerning the real presence. Anselm, an acute metaphysician and theologian, his immediate successor in the same see, was called from the government of the abbey of Bec, in Normandy. Herman, a Norman, bishop of Salisbury, founded a noble library in the ancient cathedral of that see. Many of the Norman prelates preferred in England by the Conqueror were polite scholars. Godfrey, prior of St. Swithin's at Winchester, a native of Cambray, was an elegant Latin epigrammatist, and wrote with the smartness and ease of Martial; a circumstance which, by the way, shows that the literature of the monks at this period was of a more liberal cast than that which we commonly annex to their character and profession."\* Geoffrey, also, another learned Norman, came over from the University of Paris, and established a school at Dunstaple, where, according to Matthew Paris, he composed a play, called the Play of St. Catherine, which was acted by his scholars, dressed characteristically in copes borrowed from the sacrist of the neighbouring abbey of St. Albans, of which Geoffrey afterwards became abbot. "The king himself," War-

\* Warton's Dissertation on Introduction of Learning into England, prefixed to History of English Poetry, p. cxliii. (edit. of 1824).

ton continues, "gave no small countenance to the clergy, in sending his son Henry Beauclerc to the abbey of Abingdon, where he was initiated in the sciences under the care of the abbot Grymbald, and Farice, a physician of Oxford. Robert d'Oilly, constable of Oxford Castle, was ordered to pay for the board of the young prince in the convent, which the king himself frequently visited. Nor was William wanting in giving ample revenues to learning. He founded the magnificent abbeys of Battle and Selby, with other smaller convents. His nobles and their successors co-operated with this liberal spirit in erecting many monasteries. Herbert de Losinga, a monk of Normandy, bishop of Thetford in Norfolk, instituted and endowed with large possessions a Benedictine abbey at Norwich, consisting of sixty monks. To mention no more instances, such great institutions of persons dedicated to religious and literary leisure, while they diffused an air of civility, and softened the manners of the people in their respective circles, must have afforded powerful incentives to studious pursuits, and have consequently added no small degree of stability to the interests of learning." \*

To this it may be added, that most of the successors of the Conqueror continued to show the same regard for learning of which he had set the example. Nearly all of them had themselves received a learned education. Besides Henry Beauclerc, Henry II., whose father Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, was famous for his literary acquirements, had been carefully educated

\* Ibid. Some inaccuracies in Warton's account of Geoffrey and his play are corrected in a note by Mr. Douce.

under the superintendence of his admirable uncle, the Earl of Gloucester; and he appears to have taken care that his children should not want the advantages he had himself enjoyed; for at least the three eldest, Henry, Geoffrey, and Richard, are all noted for their literary as well as their other accomplishments.

What learning existed, however, was still for the most part confined to the clergy. Even the nobility—although it cannot be supposed that they were left altogether without literary instruction—appear to have been very rarely initiated in any of those branches which were considered as properly constituting the scholarship of the times. The familiar knowledge of the Latin language in particular, which was then the key to all other erudition, seems to have been almost exclusively confined to churchmen, and to those few of the laity who embraced the profession of schoolmasters, as some, at least on the Continent, were now wont to do. The contemporary writer of a *Life of Becket* relates, that when Henry II., in 1164, sent an embassy to the Pope, in which the Earl of Arundel and three other noblemen were associated with an archbishop, four bishops, and three of the royal chaplains, four of the churchmen, at the audience to which they were admitted, first delivered themselves in as many Latin harangues; and then the Earl of Arundel stood up, and made a speech in English, which he began with the words, “We, who are illiterate laymen, do not understand one word of what the bishops have said to your holiness.”

The notion that learning properly belonged exclusively to the clergy, and that it was a possession in which the laity were unworthy to participate, was in some degree



the common belief of the age, and by the learned themselves was almost universally held as an article of faith that admitted of no dispute. Nothing can be more strongly marked than the tone of contempt which is expressed for the mass of the community, the unlearned vulgar, by the scholars of this period ; in their correspondence with one another especially, they seem to look upon all beyond their own small circle as beings of an inferior species. This pride of theirs, however, worked beneficially upon the whole : in the first place, it was in great part merely a proper estimation of the advantages of knowledge over ignorance ; and, secondly, it helped to make the man of the pen a match for him of the sword—the natural liberator of the human race for its natural oppressor. At the same time, it intimates very forcibly at once the comparative rarity of the highly prized distinction, and the depth of the darkness that still reigned far and wide around the few scattered points of light.

## SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES.

Schools and other seminaries of learning, however, were greatly multiplied in this age, and were also elevated in their character, in England as well as elsewhere. Both Archbishop Lanfranc and his successor Anselm exerted themselves with great zeal in establishing proper schools in connexion with the cathedrals and monasteries in all parts of the kingdom ; and the object was one which was also patronized and promoted by the general voice of the church. In 1179 it was ordered by the third general council of Lateran, that in every cathedral should be appointed and maintained a head teacher, or scholastic, as was the title given to him, who, besides keeping a school

of his own, should have authority over all the other schoolmasters of the diocese, and the sole right of granting licences, without which no one should be entitled to teach. In former times the bishop himself had frequently undertaken the office of scholastic of the diocese; but its duties were rarely efficiently performed under that arrangement, and at length they seem to have come to be generally altogether neglected. After the custom was introduced of maintaining it as a distinct office, it was filled in many cases by the most learned persons of the time. Besides these cathedral schools there were others established in all the religious houses, and many of the latter were also of high reputation. It is reckoned that of religious houses of all kinds there were founded no fewer than five hundred and fifty-seven between the Conquest and the death of King John; and, besides these, there still existed many others that had been founded in the Saxon times. All these cathedral and conventual schools, however, appear to have been intended exclusively for the instruction of persons proposing to make the church their profession. But mention is also made of others established both in many of the principal cities and even in the villages, which would seem to have been open to the community at large; for it may be presumed that the laity, though generally excluded from the benefits of a learned education, were not left wholly without the means of obtaining some elementary instruction. Some of these city schools, however, were eminent as institutes of the highest departments of learning. One in particular is mentioned by Matthew Paris as established in the town of St. Albans, which was presided over by Matthew, a physician, who had been educated at the

famous school of Salerno, in Italy, and by his nephew Garinus, who was eminent for his knowledge of the civil and canon laws, and where we may therefore suppose instructions were given both in law and in medicine. According to the account of London by William Stephanides, or Fitz-Stephen, written in the reign of Henry II., there were then three of these schools of a higher order established in London, besides several others that were occasionally opened by distinguished teachers. The London schools, however, do not seem to have been academies of science and the higher learning, like that of St. Albans: Fitz-Stephen's description would rather lead us to infer that, although they were attended by pupils of different ages and degrees of proficiency, they were merely schools of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics. "On holidays," he says, "it is usual for these schools to hold public assemblies in the churches, in which the scholars engage in demonstrative or logical disputations, some using enthymems, and others perfect syllogisms; some aiming at nothing but to gain the victory, and make an ostentatious display of their acuteness, while others have the investigation of truth in view. Artful sophists on these occasions acquire great applause; some by a prodigious inundation and flow of words, others by their specious but fallacious arguments. After the disputations other scholars deliver rhetorical declamations, in which they observe all the rules of art, and neglect no topic of persuasion. Even the younger boys in the different schools contend against each other, in verse, about the principles of grammar, and the preterites and supines of verbs."

The twelfth century may be considered as properly the age of the institution of what we now call Universities in

Europe, though many of the establishments that then assumed the regular form of universities had undoubtedly existed long before as schools or *studia*. This was the case with the oldest of the European universities, with Bologna and Paris, and also, in all probability, with Oxford and Cambridge. But it may be questioned if even Bologna, the mother of all the rest, was entitled, by any organization or constitution it had received, to take a higher name than a school or *studium* before the latter part of this century. It is admitted that it was not till about the year 1200 that the school out of which the University of Paris arose had come to subsist as an incorporation, divided into nations, and presided over by a rector.\* The University of Oxford, properly so called, is probably of nearly the same antiquity. It seems to have been patronized and fostered by Richard I., as that of Paris was by his great rival, Philip Augustus. Both Oxford and Cambridge had undoubtedly been eminent seats of learning long before this time, as London, St. Albans, and other cities had also been; but there is no evidence that either the one or the other had at an earlier date become anything more than a great school, or even that it was distinguished by any assigned rank or privileges above the other great schools of the kingdom. In the reign of Richard I. we find the University of Oxford recognised as an establishment of the same kind with the University of Paris, and as the rival of that seminary.

We have the following account of what is commonly deemed the origin of the University of Cambridge in the continuation of the history of Ingulphus, attributed to Peter of Blois:—"Joffrid, Abbot of Croyland, sent to

\* See Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 255.

his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge, Master Gislebert, his fellow monk, and professor of theology, with three other monks who had followed him into England; who being very well instructed in philosophical theorems and other primitive sciences, went every day to Cambridge, and, having hired a certain public barn, taught the sciences openly, and in a little time collected a great concourse of scholars; for, in the very second year after their arrival, the number of their scholars from the town and country increased so much that there was no house, barn, nor church capable of containing them. For this reason they separated into different parts of the town, and, imitating the plan of the Studium of Orleans, brother Odo, who was eminent as a grammarian and satirical poet, read grammar, according to the doctrine of Priscian and of his commentator Remigius, to the boys and younger students, that were assigned to him, early in the morning. At one o'clock, brother Terricus, a most acute sophist, read the Logic of Aristotle, according to the Introductions and Commentaries of Porphyry and Averroes,\* to those who were further advanced. At three, brother William read lectures on Tully's Rhetoric and Quintilian's Institutions. But Master Gislebert, being ignorant of the English, but very expert in the Latin and French languages, preached in the several churches to the people on Sundays and holidays."† The history in which

\* The works of Averroes, however, who died in 1198, were certainly not in existence at the time here referred to. Either Peter of Blois must have been ignorant of this, or—if he was really the author of the statement—the name must have been the insertion of some later transcriber of his text.

† Petri Blersensis Continuatio ad Historiam Ingulphi;

this passage occurs is, as will presently be shown, as apocryphal as that of which it professes to be the continuation ; but even if we waive the question of its authenticity, there is here no hint of any sort of incorporation or public establishment whatever ; the description is merely that of a school set on foot and conducted by an association of private individuals. And even this private school would seem to have been first opened in the year 1109, although there may possibly have been other schools taught in the place before. It may be gathered from what is added, that at the time when the account, if it was written by Peter of Blois, must have been drawn up (the latter part of the same century), the school founded by Gislebert and his companions had attained to great celebrity ; but there is nothing to lead us to suppose that it had even then become more than a very distinguished school. “ From this little fountain,” he says, “ which hath swelled into a great river, we now behold the city of God made glad, and all England rendered fruitful, by many teachers and doctors issuing from Cambridge, after the likeness of the holy Paradise.”

Notwithstanding, however, the rising reputation of Oxford and Cambridge, the most ambitious of the English students continued to resort for part of their education to the more distinguished foreign schools during the whole of the twelfth century. Thus, it is recorded that several volumes of the Arabian philosophy were brought into England by Daniel Merlac, who, in the year 1185, had gone to Toledo to study mathematics. Salerno was

in *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores Veteres*: Oxon. 1684, p. 114. The translation is that given by Henry in his *History of Britain*.

still the chief school of medicine, and Bologna of law, although Oxford was also becoming famous for the latter study. But, as a place of general instruction, the University of Paris stood at the head of all others. Paris was then wont to be styled, by way of pre-eminence, the City of Letters. So many Englishmen, or, to speak more strictly, subjects of the English crown, were constantly found among the students at this great seminary, that they formed one of the four nations into which the members of the university were divided. It would appear from the following verses of Negel Wircker, an English student at Paris in 1170, that his countrymen, whom they describe, were already noted for that spirit of display and expense which still makes so prominent a part of their continental reputation :—

Moribus egregii, verbo vultuque venusti,  
 Ingenio pollent, consilioque vigent,  
 Dona pluunt populis, et detestantur avaros,  
 Fercula multiplicant, et sine lege bibunt.\*

Of noble manners, gracious look and speech,  
 Strong sense, with genius brightened, shines in each.  
 Their free hand still rains largess ; when they dine  
 Course follows course, in rivers flows the wine.

Among the students at the University of Paris in the twelfth century are to be found nearly all the most distinguished names among the learned of every country. One of the teachers, the celebrated Abelard, is said to have alone had as pupils twenty persons who afterwards became cardinals, and more than fifty who rose to be bishops and archbishops. Thomas à Becket received part of his

\* These verses are preserved by A. Wood, *Antiq. Oxon.*, p. 55.

education here. Several of the most eminent teachers were Englishmen. Among these may be particularly mentioned Robert of Melun (so called from having first taught in that city), and Robert White, or Pullus, as he is called in Latin. Robert of Melun, who afterwards became Bishop of Hereford, distinguished himself by the zeal and ability with which he opposed the novel views which the rising sect of the Nominalists were then introducing both into philosophy and theology. He is the author of several theological treatises, none of which, however, have been printed. Robert White, after teaching some years at Paris, where he was attended by crowded audiences, was induced to return to his own country, where he is said to have read lectures on theology at Oxford for five years, which greatly contributed to spread the renown of that rising seminary. After having declined a bishopric offered to him by Henry I., he went to reside at Rome in 1143, on the invitation of Celestine II., and was soon after made a cardinal and chancellor of the holy see. One work written by him has been printed, a summary of theology, under the then common title of 'The Book of Sentences,' which has the reputation of being distinguished by the superior correctness of its style and the lucidness of its method.

Another celebrated name among the Englishmen who are recorded to have studied at Paris in those days is that of Nicolas Breakspear, who afterwards became pope by the title of Adrian IV. But, above all others, John of Salisbury deserves to be here mentioned. It is in his writings that we find the most complete account that has reached us not only of the mode of study followed at Paris, but of the entire learning of the age.



## STUDIES.—RISE OF THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY.

At this time those branches of literary and scientific knowledge which were specially called the arts were considered as divided into two great classes,—the first or more elementary of which, comprehending Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic, was called the Trivium: the second, comprehending Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy, the Quadrivium. The seven arts, so classified, used to be thus enumerated in a Latin hexameter:—

Lingua, Tropus, Ratio, Numerus, Tonus, Angulus, Astra;  
or, with definitions subjoined, in the two still more singularly constructed verses,—

*Gram.* loquitur, *Dia.* vera docet, *Rhet.* verba colorat,  
*Mus.* cadit, *Ar.* numerat, *Geo.* ponderat, *Ast.* colit astra.

John of Salisbury speaks of this system of the sciences as an ancient one in his day. “The Trivium and Quadrivium,” he says, in his work entitled ‘Metalogicus,’ “were so much admired by our ancestors in former ages, that they imagined they comprehended all wisdom and learning, and were sufficient for the solution of all questions and the removing of all difficulties; for whoever understood the Trivium could explain all manner of books without a teacher; but he who was farther advanced, and was master also of the Quadrivium, could answer all questions and unfold all the secrets of nature.” The present age, however, had outgrown the simplicity of this arrangement; and various new studies had been added to the ancient seven, as necessary to complete the circle of the sciences and the curriculum of a liberal education.

It was now, in particular, that Theology first came to be ranked as a science. This was the age of St. Bernard, the last of the Fathers, and of Peter Lombard, the first of the Schoolmen. The distinction between these two classes of writers is, that the latter do, and the former do not, treat their subject in a systematizing spirit. The change was the consequence of the cultivation of the Aristotelian Logic and Metaphysics. When these studies were first introduced into the schools of the West, they were wholly unconnected with theology. But, especially at a time when all the learned were churchmen, it was impossible that the great instrument of thought and reasoning could long remain unapplied to the most important of all the subjects of thought—the subject of religion. It would appear, as has been already stated, that John Erigena and other Irish divines introduced philosophy and metaphysics into the discussion of questions of religion as early as the eighth century; and they are consequently entitled to be regarded as having first set the example of the method afterwards pursued by the schoolmen. But although the influence of their writings may probably be traced in preparing the way for the introduction of the scholastic system, and also, afterwards, perhaps, in modifying its spirit, that system was derived immediately, in the shape in which it appeared in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, from another source. Erigena was a Platonist; the spirit of his philosophy was that of the school of Alexandria. But the first schoolmen, properly so called, were Aristotelians; they drew their logic and metaphysics originally from the Latin translations of the works of Aristotle made from the Arabic. How far, if at all they may also have been

indebted to the commentaries of the Arabic doctors, would be a curious inquiry. But, whether they took their method of philosophy entirely from the ancient heathen sage, or in part from his modern Mahomedan interpreters and illustrators, it could in neither case have had at first any necessary or natural alliance with Christianity. Yet it very soon, as we have said, formed this alliance. Both Lanfranc and Anselm, although not commonly reckoned among the schoolmen, were imbued with the spirit of the new learning, and it is infused throughout their theological writings. Abelard soon after, before he was yet a churchman, may almost be considered to have wielded it as a weapon of scepticism. Even so used, however, religion was still the subject to which it was applied. At last came Peter Lombard, who, by the publication, about the middle of the twelfth century, of his celebrated Four Books of Sentences, properly founded the system of what is called the Scholastic Theology. The schoolmen, from the Master of the Sentences, as Lombard was designated, down to Francis Suarez, who died after the commencement of the seventeenth century, were all theologians. Although, however, religious speculation was the field of thought upon which the spirit of the Aristotelian philosophy chiefly expended itself, there was scarcely any one of the arts or sciences upon which it did not in some degree seize. The scholastic logic became the universal instrument of thought and study ; every branch of human learning was attempted to be pursued by its assistance ; and most branches were more or less affected by its influence in regard to the forms which they assumed.

## JOHN OF SALISBURY.—PETER OF BLOIS.

John of Salisbury went to complete his education at Paris in the year 1136. "When I beheld," he writes in a letter to his friend Becket, "the reverence paid to the clergy, the majesty and glory of the whole church, and the various occupations of those who applied themselves to philosophy in that city, it raised my admiration as if I had seen the ladder of Jacob, the top of which reached to Heaven, while the steps were crowded with angels ascending and descending." The first master whose lectures he attended was the renowned Abelard, still, after all the vicissitudes of his life, teaching with undiminished glory, in the midst of a vast confluence of admiring disciples, on the Mount of St. Genevieve. "I drank in," says his English pupil, "with incredible avidity, every word that fell from his lips; but he soon, to my infinite regret, retired." Abelard lived only a few years after this date, which he spent in devotion and entire seclusion from the world. John of Salisbury then studied dialectics for two years under two other masters, one of whom was his countryman, Robert de Melun, mentioned above. After this he returned to the study of grammar and rhetoric, which he pursued for three years under William de Couches, of whose method of teaching he has left a particular account. It appears to have embraced a critical exposition both of the style and the matter of the writers commented upon, and to have been well calculated to nourish both the understanding and the taste. After this he spent seven years under other masters, partly in the further prosecution of his acquaintance with the writers of antiquity and the

practice of Latin composition, partly in the study of the mathematics and theology. The entire course thus occupied twelve years; but some, it would appear, devoted the whole of this time to the study of dialectics, or logic, alone. John of Salisbury's treatise entitled 'Metalogicus' is intended principally to expose the absurdity and injurious effects of this exclusive devotion to the art of wrangling; and, although it must be considered as written with some degree of satirical licence, the representation which it gives of the state of things produced by the new spirit that had gone abroad over the realms of learning is very curious and interesting. The turn of the writer's own genius was decidedly to the rhetorical rather than the metaphysical, and he was not very well qualified, perhaps, to perceive certain of the uses or recommendations of the study against which he directs his attack; but the extravagances of its devotees, it may be admitted, fairly exposed them to his ridicule and castigation. "I wish," he says in one place, "to behold the light of truth, which these logicians say is only revealed to them. I approach them,—I beseech them to instruct me, that, if possible, I may become as wise as one of them. They consent,—they promise great things,—and at first they command me to observe a Pythagorean silence, that I may be admitted into all the secrets of wisdom which they pretend are in their possession. But by-and-by they permit, and even command me, to prattle and quibble with them. This they call disputing; this they say is logic; but I am no wiser." He accuses them of wasting their ingenuity in the discussion of such puerile puzzles as whether a person in buying a whole cloak also bought the cowl? or

whether, when a hog was carried to market with a rope tied about its neck and held at the other end by a man, the hog was really carried to market by the man or by the rope? It must be confessed that, if their logic had been worth much, it ought to have made short work with these questions, if their settlement was deemed worth any thing. Our author adds, however, that they were declared to be questions which could not be solved, the arguments on both sides exactly balancing each other. But his quarrel with the dialecticians was chiefly on the ground of the disregard and aversion they manifested, in their method of exercising the intellectual powers, to all polite literature, to all that was merely graceful and ornamental. And there can be no question that the ascendancy of the scholastic philosophy was fatal for the time to the cultivation of polite literature in Europe. So long as it reigned supreme in the schools, learning was wholly divorced from taste. The useful utterly rejected all connexion with the beautiful. The head looked down with contempt upon the heart. Poetry and fiction, and whatever else belonged to the imaginative part of our nature, were left altogether to the unlearned, to the makers of songs and lays for the people. It was probably fortunate for poetry, and the kindred forms of literature, in the end, that they were thus left solely to the popular cultivation for a time; they drew nourishment and new life from the new soil into which they were transplanted; and their produce has been the richer and the racier for it ever since. The revival of polite literature probably came at a better time in the fifteenth, than if it had come in the twelfth century. Yet it was not to be expected that, when it was threat-

ened with blight and extinction at the earlier era, its friends should either have been able to foresee its resurrection two or three centuries later, or should have been greatly consoled by that prospect if they had.

John of Salisbury's chief work is his 'Polycraticon,' or, as he further entitles it, 'A Treatise in eight books, on the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footsteps of Philosophers' (*De Nugis Curialium et Vestigiis Philosophorum*). "It is," says Warton, "an extremely pleasant miscellany, replete with erudition, and a judgment of men and things, which properly belongs to a more sensible and reflecting period. His familiar acquaintance with the classics appears not only from the happy facility of his language, but from the many citations of the purest Roman authors with which his works are perpetually interspersed."\* He also wrote Latin verses with extreme elegance. John of Salisbury died bishop of Chartres in 1182. Peter of Blois (or *Petrus Blesensis*), a native of the town in France from which he takes his name, was another distinguished cultivator of polite literature in the same age. Among the writings he has left us, his Letters collected by himself to the number of 134, are especially interesting, abounding as they do in graphic descriptions of the manners and characters of the time. But neither in elegance of taste and style, nor in general literary accomplishment, is the Frenchman to be compared with his English contemporary.

\* *Introd. of Learning into Eng.* p. cliii.

## CLASSICAL LEARNING.—MATHEMATICS.—MEDICINE.—

## LAW.—BOOKS.

The classical knowledge of this period, however, was almost confined to the Roman authors, and some of the most eminent of these were as yet unstudied and unknown. Even John of Salisbury, though a few Greek words are to be found in his compositions, seems to have had only the slightest possible acquaintance with that language. Both it and the Hebrew, nevertheless, were known to Abelard and Eloisa; and it is probable that there were both in England and other European countries a few students of the oriental tongues, for the acquisition of which inducements and facilities must have been presented, not only by the custom of resorting to the Arabic colleges in Spain, and the constant intercourse with the East kept up by the pilgrimages and the crusades, but also by the numbers of learned Jews that were everywhere to be found. In England the Jews had schools in London, York, Lincoln, Lynn, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, and other towns, which appear to have been attended by Christians as well as by those of their own persuasion. Some of these seminaries, indeed, were rather colleges than schools. Besides the Hebrew and Arabic languages, arithmetic and medicine are mentioned among the branches of knowledge that were taught in them; and the masters were generally the most distinguished of the rabbis. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the age of Sarchi, the Kimchis, Maïmonides, and other distinguished names, rabbinical learning was in an eminently flourishing state.

There is no certain evidence that the Arabic numerals



were yet known in Europe; they certainly were not in general use. Although the Elements of Euclid and other geometrical works had been translated into Latin from the Arabic, the mathematical sciences appear to have been but little studied. "The science of demonstration," says John of Salisbury, in his Metalogicus, "is of all others the most difficult, and alas! is almost quite neglected, except by a very few who apply to the study of the mathematics, and particularly of geometry. But this last is at present very little attended to amongst us, and is only studied by some persons in Spain, Egypt, and Arabia, for the sake of astronomy. One reason of this is, that those parts of the works of Aristotle that relate to the demonstrative sciences are so ill translated, and so incorrectly transcribed, that we meet with insurmountable difficulties in every chapter." The name of the mathematics at this time, indeed, was chiefly given to the science of astrology. "Mathematicians," says Peter of Blois, "are those who, from the position of the stars, the aspect of the firmament, and the motions of the planets, discover things that are to come." Astronomy, however, or the true science of the stars, which was zealously cultivated by the Arabs in the East and in Spain, seems also to have had some cultivators among the learned of Christian Europe. Latin translations existed of several Greek and Arabic astronomical works. In the History attributed to Ingulphus, is the following curious description of a sort of scheme or representation of the planetary system called the Nadir, which is stated to have been destroyed when the abbey of Croyland was burnt in 1091: "We then lost a most beautiful and precious table, fabricated of different kinds of metals,

according to the variety of the stars and heavenly signs. Saturn was of copper, Jupiter of gold, Mars of iron, the sun of latten, Mercury of amber, Venus of tin, the moon of silver. The eyes were charmed, as well as the mind instructed, by beholding the colure circles, with the zodiac and all its signs, formed with wonderful art, of metals and precious stones, according to their several natures, forms, figures, and colours. It was the most admired and celebrated Nadir in all England." These last words would seem to imply that such tables were then not uncommon. This one, it is stated, had been presented to a former abbot of Croyland by a king of France.

John of Salisbury, in his account of his studies at Paris, makes no mention either of medicine or of law. With regard to the former, indeed, he elsewhere expressly tells us that the Parisians themselves used to go to study it at Salerno and Montpellier. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, we find a school of medicine established at Paris, which soon became very celebrated. Of course there were, at an earlier date, persons who practised the medical art in that city. The physicians in all the countries of Europe at this period were generally churchmen. Many of the Arabic medical works were early translated into Latin; but the Parisian professors soon began to publish treatises on the art of their own. The science of the physicians of this age, besides comprehending whatever was to be learned respecting the diagnostics and treatment of diseases from Hippocrates, Galen, and the other ancient writers, embraced a considerable body of botanical and chemical knowledge. Chemistry in particular the Arabs

had carried far beyond the point at which it had been left by the ancients. Of anatomy little could as yet be accurately known, while the dissection of the human subject was not practised. Yet it would appear that physicians and surgeons were already beginning to be distinguished from each other. Both the canon and civil laws were also introduced into the routine of study at the University of Paris soon after the time when John of Salisbury studied there. The canon law was originally considered to be a part of theology, and only took the form of a separate study after the publication of the systematic compilation of it called the *Decretum* of Gratian, in 1151. Gratian was a monk of Bologna, and his work, not the first collection of the kind, but the most complete and the best arranged that had yet been compiled, was immediately introduced as a text-book in that university. It may be regarded as having laid the foundation of the science of the canon law, in the same manner as the system of the scholastic philosophy was founded by Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*. Regular lecturers upon it very soon appeared at Orleans, at Paris, at Oxford, and all the other chief seats of learning in western Christendom; and before the end of the twelfth century no other study was more eagerly pursued, or attracted greater crowds of students, than that of the canon law. One of its first and most celebrated teachers at Paris was Girard la Pucelle, an Englishman, who afterwards became Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. Girard taught the canon law in Paris from 1160 to 1177; and, in consideration of his distinguished merits and what was deemed the great importance of his instructions, he received from Pope Alexander III. letters

exempting him from the obligation of residing on his preferments in England while he was so engaged; this being, it is said, the first known example of such a privilege being granted to any professor.\* The same professors who taught the canon law taught also, along with it, the civil law, the systematic study of which, likewise, took its rise in this century, and at the University of Bologna, where the Pandects of Justinian, of which a more perfect copy than had before been known is said to have been found, in 1137, at Amalphi,† were arranged and first lectured upon by the German Irnerius, —the Lamp of the Law, as he was called,—about the year 1150. Both the canon and the civil law, however, are said to have been taught a few years before this time at Oxford by Roger, surnamed the Bachelor, a monk of Bec, in Normandy. The study was, from the first, vehemently opposed by the practitioners of the common law; but, sustained by the influence of the church, and eventually also favoured by the government, it rose above all attempts to put it down. John of Salisbury affirms that, by the blessing of God, the more it was persecuted the more it flourished. Peter of Blois, in one of his letters, gives us the following curious account of the ardour with which it was pursued under the superintendence of Archbishop Theobald:—"In the house

\* Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 244.

† "The discovery of the Pandects at Amalphi," says Gibbon, "is first noticed (in 1501) by Ludovicus Bologninus, on the faith of a Pisan Chronicle, without a name or date. The whole story, though unknown to the twelfth century, embellished by ignorant ages, and suspected by rigid criticism, is not, however destitute of much internal probability."

of my master, the Archbishop of Canterbury, there are several very learned men, famous for their knowledge of law and politics, who spend the time between prayers and dinner in lecturing, disputing, and debating causes. To us all the knotty questions of the kingdom are referred, which are produced in the common hall, and every one in his order, having first prepared himself, declares, with all the eloquence and acuteness of which he is capable, but without wrangling, what is wisest and safest to be done. If God suggests the soundest opinion to the youngest amongst us, we all agree to it without envy or detraction." \*

Study in every department must have been still greatly impeded by the scarcity and high price of books; but their multiplication now went on much more rapidly than it had formerly done. We have already noticed the immense libraries said to have been accumulated by the Arabs, both in their oriental and European seats of empire. No collections to be compared with these existed anywhere in Christian Europe; but, of the numerous monasteries that were planted in every country, few were without libraries of greater or less extent. A convent without a library, it used to be proverbially said, was like a castle without an armoury. When the monastery of Croydon was burnt in 1091, its library, according to Ingulphus, consisted of 900 volumes, of which 300 were very large. "In every great abbey," says Warton, "there was an apartment called the Scriptorium; where many writers were constantly busied in transcribing not only the service-books for the choir, but books for the library. The Scriptorium of St. Alban's abbey was built

\* Ep. vi., as translated in Henry's History of Britain.

by Abbot Paulin, a Norman, who ordered many volumes to be written there, about the year 1080. Archbishop Lanfranc furnished the copies. Estates were often granted for the support of the Scriptorium . . . . I find some of the classics written in the English monasteries very early. Henry, a Benedictine monk of Hyde Abbey, near Winchester, transcribed, in the year 1178, Terence, Boethius, Suetonius, and Claudian. Of these he formed one book, illuminating the initials, and forming the brazen bosses of the covers with his own hands." Other instances of the same kind are added. The monks were much accustomed both to illuminate and to bind books, as well as to transcribe them. "The scarcity of parchment," it is afterwards observed, "undoubtedly prevented the transcription of many other books in these societies. About the year 1120, one Master Hugh, being appointed by the convent of St. Edmondsbury, in Suffolk, to write and illuminate a grand copy of the Bible for their library, could procure no parchment for this purpose in England."\* Paper made of cotton, nowever, was certainly in common use in the twelfth century, though no evidence exists that that manufactured from linen rags was known till about the middle of the thirteenth.

#### THE LATIN LANGUAGE.

During the whole of the period embraced in the present Book, and down to a much later date, in England as in the other countries of Christendom, the common language of literary composition, in all works intended for the perusal of the educated classes, was still the Latin,

\* Introd. of Learning into Eng. p. cxlvi.

the language of religion throughout the western world, as it had been in the first ages of the church. Christianity had not only, through its monastic institutions, saved from destruction, in the breaking up of the Roman empire, whatever we still possess of ancient literature, but had also, by its priesthood and its ritual, preserved the language of Rome in some sort still a living and spoken tongue—corrupted indeed by the introduction of many new and barbarous terms, and illegitimate acceptations, and by much bad taste in style and phraseology, but still wholly unchanged in its grammatical forms, and even in its vocabulary much less altered than it probably would have been if it had continued all the while to be spoken and written by an unmixed Roman population. It would almost seem as if, even in the Teutonic countries, such as England, the services of the church, uninterruptedly repeated in the same words since the first ages, had kept up in the general mind something of a dim traditionary understanding of the old imperial tongue. We read of some foreign ecclesiastics, who could not speak English, being accustomed to preach to the people in Latin. A passage quoted above from the Croydon History seems to imply that Gislebert, or Gilbert, one of the founders of the University of Cambridge, used to employ Latin as well as French on such occasions. So, Giraldus Cambrensis tells us that, in a progress which he made through Wales in 1186, to assist Archbishop Baldwin in preaching a new crusade for the delivery of the Holy Land, he was always most successful when he appealed to the people in a Latin sermon; he asserts, indeed, that they did not understand a word of it, although it never failed to melt them into tears, and to make them come

in crowds to take the cross; no doubt they were acted upon chiefly through their ears and their imaginations, and for the most part only supposed that they comprehended what they were listening to; but it is probable that their self-deception was assisted by their catching a word or phrase here and there the meaning of which they really understood. The Latin tongue must in those days have been heard in common life on a thousand occasions from which it has now passed away. It was the language of all the learned professions, of law and physic as well as of divinity, in all their grades. It was in Latin that the teachers at the Universities (many of whom, as well as of the ecclesiastics, were foreigners) delivered their prelections in all the sciences, and that all the disputations and other exercises among the students were carried on. It was the same at all the monastic schools and other seminaries of learning. The number of persons by whom these various institutions were attended was very great; they were of all ages from boyhood to advanced manhood; and poor scholars must have been found in every village, mingling with every class of the people, in some one or other of the avocations which they followed in the intervals of their attendance at the Universities, or after they had finished their education, from parish priests down to wandering beggars.

#### LATIN POETS—MAPES, ETC.

Much Latin poetry was written in this age by Englishmen, some of it of a popular character. Warton enumerates Joannes Grammaticus, Lawrence Prior of Durham, Robert Dunstable, the historians Henry of



Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Eadmer, William of Malmesbury, Giraldus Cambrensis, and Geoffrey de Vinesauf; John Hanvil, Alexander Neckham, Walter Mapes Archdeacon of Oxford, and above all Joseph Iscanus, or Joseph of Exeter, whom he characterises as “a miracle in classical composition;” adding, in regard to one of his works, an epic on the subject of the Trojan war, “The diction of this poem is generally pure, the periods round, and the numbers harmonious; and on the whole the structure of the versification approaches nearly to that of polished Latin poetry.”\* Walter Mapes, or rather Map, who was Archdeacon of Oxford, has the credit of having been the author of most of the pieces of Latin poetry belonging to the latter part of the twelfth century, which from their form and character may be supposed to have acquired any thing like general popularity. In particular the famous drinking song, in rhyming, or Leonine verse, beginning—

“Meum est propositum in taberna mori,”

is attributed to this “genial archdeacon.”†

\* Dissertation on the Introd. of Learning into England, cxlix.—clxiii.

† The expression is Warton’s (Diss. on Introd. of Learning, p. clxi.). ‘The Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes’ have lately been printed by the Camden Society, as ‘collected and edited by Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.’ &c. &c. &c., 4to., Lon. 1841. In an Introduction to this volume Mr. Wright remarks, “The common notion that Walter Mapes was a ‘jovial toper’ must be placed in the long list of vulgar errors.” On what grounds of reason or evidence this imperative *dictum* may rest does not appear. The drinking song as commonly given forms part of one of the pieces which Mr. Wright has printed, one which he admits has been constantly attributed to Mapes, and the authorship of which, he says, he hesitates, without any direct

## LATIN CHRONICLERS.

But by far the most valuable portion of our Latin literature of this age consists of the numerous historical works which it has bequeathed to us. As these works have a double interest for the English reader, belonging to the country and the age in which they were written by their subject as well as by their authorship, we will enumerate the most important of them.

The following, we may premise, are the principal collections that have been made in modern times of our old Latin historians or chroniclers:—

1. *Rerum Britannicarum, id est, Angliæ, Scotiæ,*

evidence to the contrary, in taking from him; and the only correction which the perusal of the entire poem can make upon the impression produced by the part commonly quoted is to extend the sense in which we must consider the author to have been what he has been designated, the Anacreon of his day. Lord Lyttleton, from whom that epithet is quoted by Warton as a very happy one, has inadvertently written the Anacreon of the *eleventh*, instead of the *twelfth*, century; and this slip, passed over without detection by Warton and his late able and accomplished editor, has been animadverted upon, with much satisfaction, by critics and literary historians of another order. Mapes lived and wrote in the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I.: his death, according to Mr. Wright, “is supposed to have occurred towards the year 1210.” (Introd. to Poems, p. vii.) But Mr. Wright himself had not inquired so curiously as he was subsequently led to do into this matter when a few years before he compiled his collection of our early ‘Political Songs’ (printed for the Camden Society, 4to., 1839); in which, speaking of the satirical poetry “produced *during the whole of*” the thirteenth century, he states that *much of* it had been attributed, “*perhaps with little reason, to Walter Mapes.*” In truth, there is no evidence that Mapes ever saw the thirteenth century.

Vicinarumque Insularum ac Regionum, Scriptores Vestustiores ac Præcipui: (a HIER. COMMELINO). Fol. Heidelb. & Lugd. 1587.

2. Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores post Bedam Præcipui, ex Vetustissimis MSS. nunc primum in lucem editi: (a HEN. SAVILE). Fol. Lon. 1596, and Francof. 1601.

3. Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a veteribus Scripta, ex. Bibl. GUILLIELMI CAMDENI. Fol. Francof. 1603.

4. Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores X. ex Vetustis MSS. nunc primum in lucem editi: (a ROG. TWYSDEN et JOAN. SELDEN). Fol. Lon. 1652.

5. Rerum Anglicarum Scriptorum Veterum Tomus Imus; Quorum Ingulfus nunc primum integer, ceteri nunc primum prodeunt: (a JOAN. FELL, vel potius GUL. FULMAN). Fol. Oxon. 1684 (sometimes incorrectly cited as the 1st vol. of Gale's Collection).

6. Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Quinque, ex Vetustis Codicibus MSS. nunc primum in lucem editi: (a THOM. GALE). Fol. Oxon. 1687. (This is properly the 2nd vol. of Gale's Collection.)

7. Historiæ Britannicæ, Saxonicæ, Anglo-Danicæ, Scriptores XV. ex Vetustis Cod. MSS. editi, Opera THOMÆ GALE. Fol. Oxon. 1691. (This is properly the 1st vol. of Gale's Collection.)

8. Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Varii, e Codicibus manuscriptis nunc primum editi: (a JOS. SPARKE). Fol. Lon. 1723.

9. Historiæ Normannorum Scriptores Antiqui; studio ANDRÆE DUCHESNE. Fol. Paris, 1619.

10. Historiæ Anglicanæ circa tempus Conquestus Angliæ a Gulielmo Notho. Normannorum Duce, Selecta

Monumenta; excerpta ex volumine And. Duchesne; cum Notis, &c., a FRANCISCO MASERES. 4to., Lon. 1783, and 1807.

#### INGULPHUS.

The history of the abbey of Croyland, or, as the place is now called, Crowland, in Lincolnshire, professing to be written by the Abbot Ingulphus, who presided over the establishment from A.D. 1075 till his death, at the age of about eighty, in 1109, was first published from an imperfect copy by Sir Henry Savile in his collection (Lon. 1596, and Frankfort, 1601); and afterwards in a more complete form by Fulman in his *Scriptores Veteres* (Oxford, 1684). In the interval between these two (the only) editions of the work, the Laws of William the Conqueror, in French, which were wanting in the MS. used by Savile, were published from another MS. by Selden in 1623 in his edition of Eadmer, and from another by Sir Henry Spelman in 1639 in the first volume of his *Concilia*. All these four (the only known) MSS. of the work have now disappeared: of what has become of that used by Savile nothing is known; that from which Selden took his copy of the Laws of the Conqueror seems to have been one which was in the Cotton Library—the same from which Fulman was supplied with a leaf in which his own MS. was defective, by his friend Gale\*—and that was destroyed by the calamitous fire at Ashburnham House in 1731; that which Spelman transcribed was preserved in the church of Croyland, in a chest locked with three keys, which were kept by the churchwardens, and was believed by him to be what it

\* See *Rer. Ang. Script.* 1684, *Præfat.* and p. 131.

was reputed, the author's autograph—but, as Selden could not obtain access to it a few years before, so nobody has seen it since, and, when Fulman made inquiry after it in the latter part of the same century, it was no longer to be found ;—finally, that employed by Fulman, which belonged to Sir John Marsham, was afterwards given or lent by him to Obadiah Walker, the famous Master of University College, who was turned out at the Revolution in 1688, and all that further appears is that Walker told Bishop Gibson in 1694 that it was then in the library of University College, where however it has not since been found. It seems most likely that it never was deposited there, but was carried off by Walker, who professed to consider it as his own property on the simple principle, which it appears is recognized among antiquarian collectors, that he had once, no matter by what means, got it into his possession. “The old gentleman,” writes Gibson to Dr. Charlett, the then Master of University College, in relating what had just passed between them on the subject, “has too much of the spirit of an antiquary and a great scholar to think stealing a manuscript any sin. He has ordered me not to discover where it is lodged.” These particulars are mostly collected from a learned and valuable paper on the sources of Anglo-Saxon history which appeared some years ago in the *Quarterly Review*,\* and to which we shall have frequent occasion further to refer. The writer (understood to be Sir Francis Palgrave) proceeds to show, very ingeniously and conclusively, that the MS. which Spelman saw at Croydon could not in all probability have been older than the end of the thirteenth or the begin-

\* Vol. xxxiv. No. 67 (for June, 1826), pp. 248—298.

ning of the fourteenth century, from a mistranscription of a word in his extract (*Euestres* for *Euesges*), which was very likely to have taken place in copying a writing of that date, but could hardly have happened in reading a manuscript of the end of the eleventh century, the age of Ingulphus. But, if the external evidence for the antiquity and authenticity of the work be thus defective, the internal evidence may be pronounced to be conclusive against its claim to be accounted either the composition of Ingulphus or a work of any historical value. It appears in fact to be, if not altogether what the reviewer calls it, "an historical novel," at least in the main a monkish forgery of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, which may possibly contain some things not the produce of the writer's invention, and found by him in histories or other records now lost, but no statement in which, whatever appearance of probability it may wear, can be safely received upon its authority. Not only the portion of the history which relates to the times preceding the pretended writer's own age, but the account which Ingulphus is made to give of himself is full of the most glaring improbabilities, and in some parts demonstrably false and impossible. For the demonstration, however, we must refer the reader to the article in the *Quarterly Review*, the writer of which justly observes that "anachronisms which merely impeach the *accuracy* of the *historian* are entirely *fatal* to *autobiography*." In none of our chroniclers anterior to the fourteenth century, the reviewer asserts, is there a single line to be traced that is borrowed from Ingulphus; and this is a fact of no slight significance:—"if the work," he remarks, "had existed, it could scarcely have been neglected by these

inveterate compilers." Of course, if the History of Croyland by Ingulphus be rejected, its continuation to A.D. 1118, attributed to Peter of Blois, which was also contained in the Cotton and Sir John Marsham's codices, and is published in Fulman's Collection, must be included in the same sentence, its pretended author having died long before the date at which, upon this supposition, the work he professes to continue was written.

## WILLIAM OF POITIERS.

Putting Ingulphus and his continuator aside, our oldest historian of the Conquest will be William of Poitiers (Guillelmus Pictavensis, Pictaviensis, or Pictavinus), whose Life of the Conqueror (*Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum*) was published by Duchesne in his *Historiæ Normannorum Scriptores*, Paris, 1619, and has been reprinted by Baron Maseres in his useful selection from that scarce volume, Lon. 1808. A new edition is also announced as in preparation by the Historical Society; and a translation into French, originally published at Caen in 1826, is included in M. Guizot's '*Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France, jusqu'au 13e siècle*,' 31 vols. 8vo., Paris, 1820-35. Unfortunately the only known MS. of the work, which is in the Cotton Library at the British Museum, is imperfect: Ordericus Vitalis (writing in the beginning of the next century) expressly describes the narrative as ending with the death of Earl Edwin in 1070, but what we have of it comes down only to March, or April, 1067. The beginning is also wanting. What remains, however, which includes the English and Norman story from the death of Canute in 1035, when

the Norman duke was only eight years old, to his coronation as king of England after the victory of Hastings, and the first acts of his reign, is of the highest value. William of Poitiers was not an Englishman; he was a native of Normandy, and derived his surname of Pictaviensis from having received his education at Poitiers; but he appears to have accompanied his hero and patron on his expedition to England, and in that as well as in the other parts of his story, to relate for the most part what he had seen with his own eyes. He had been in close attendance upon or connexion with the Conqueror for the greater part of their lives, having first served under him as a soldier, and having afterwards been made his chaplain—if indeed he may not, like Friar Tuck with Robin Hood in the next age, have officiated at the same time in both these capacities. No one, therefore, could have enjoyed better opportunities of observing and appreciating William in all aspects of his character, public and domestic, as a sovereign and as a man; and Pictaviensis had both head and heart enough of his own to comprehend the high nature with which he was thus brought into contact. His biography of the Conqueror is throughout a cordial and sympathizing narrative—a full-length picture of a great man drawn at least with no timid hand. Yet there is no profession or apparent design of defence or panegyric, and but little direct expression of admiration; that feeling is too natural, too habitual, too much a matter of course with the worthy chaplain to be very often or very emphatically expressed; with no misgivings either of his subject or of his reader, he contents himself for the most part with stating facts, and leaving them to speak for them-



selves. The work, it may be added, is written with considerable ambition of eloquence; Pictaviensis had had a learned education to begin with, which his campaigning did not knock out of him, so that, when he returned in his old age to his native country and was made archdeacon of Lisieux, he was esteemed quite a shining light of scholarship in the Norman church. In the judgment of Ordericus Vitalis his Latin is an imitation of that of Sallust; and in the same subtle and artistic style, we are told, he also wrote much verse, none of which, however, appears to be now extant. The statement elsewhere made by Ordericus, we may remark by the by, that circumstances prevented William of Poitiers from bringing down his history, as he had intended to do, to the death of the Conqueror (whom it may be inferred he survived), negatives Camden's conjecture that a remarkable fragment, taken from an ancient book belonging to the monastery of St. Stephen at Caen, which he has printed in his collection, containing an account of the Conqueror's last hours, and of his death and funeral, may probably be the composition of this writer. At any rate, it is no part of the present work. Nor indeed does the style resemble that of Pictaviensis. It is, however, a curious and striking narrative. The English reader will find a translation of it in Stow's Chronicle.

## ORDERICUS VITALIS.

Ordericus Vitalis is the author of a general Ecclesiastical History, beginning from the Creation and coming down to A.D. 1141, the whole of which, consisting of thirteen books, and occupying above 600 folio pages, or

more than the half of his collection, Duchesne has printed. A new edition of the entire work, by M. A. le Provost, has recently been at least begun under the auspices of the Société de l'Histoire de France, 8vo. Paris, 1834, &c. Ordericus, or Ordricus, who eventually became a monk of the monastery of Uticum, or St. Evroult, in Normandy, was of English birth; he was born at a village which he calls Attingesham (Atcham) on the Severn, in Shropshire, in 1075; and, although he had been carried to the Continent to be educated for the ecclesiastical profession when he was only in his eleventh year, and spent all the rest of his life abroad, he continued to take a special interest in the affairs of his native country, and of its Norman sovereigns, with whom his father, whom he calls Odelerius, the son of Constantius of Orleans, had probably been nearly connected as principal counsellor (*præcipuo consiliario*), whatever that may mean, to Roger Montgomery, earl of Shrewsbury, who was one of the followers of the Conqueror. He is accordingly very full in his account of English transactions from the epoch of the Norman Conquest; and his history is particularly valuable in the portion of it from A.D. 1066 to 1070, as in some sort supplying what is lost of that of Pictaviensis, whose narrative he professes generally to have followed, although not without both omissions and variations. This portion of the History of Ordericus Vitalis, making about a thirteenth part of the whole, has been reprinted by Maseres in his '*Selecta Monumenta*;' and there is a French translation of the entire work in the collection of ancient French '*Mémoires*' published at Paris under the superintendence of M. Guizot. (Vols. 25, 26, 27, and 28.)

## GESTA STEPHANI.—WILLIAM OF JUMIEGES.

Another valuable portion of the English history of this period by a contemporary writer, which Duchesne has published, is the tract entitled ‘Gesta Stephani,’ filling about fifty of his pages. It is by a partizan of Stephen, but is probably the fairest, as it is the fullest and most distinct, account we have of his turbulent reign.

In Duchesne’s Collection is likewise the History, in eight books, of the Dukes of Normandy, by William, the monk of Jumieges, surnamed Calculus—*Willelmi Calculi Gemmeticensis Monachi Historia Normannorum*—which Camden had printed before, from a worse manuscript and less correctly, in his *Anglica, Normannica, &c.* Of this also there is a French translation in M. Guizot’s Collection (vol. 29): it was originally published at Caen, along with William of Poitiers, in 1826. *Gemmeticensis* in the earlier part of his work, down to the accession of Duke Richard II., the great-grandfather of William the Conqueror, in 996, is little more than an abridger of the earlier Norman historian Dudo (also in Duchesne); but there are a few facts not elsewhere to be found in the sequel, which brings down the narrative of Norman and English affairs to his own time, and which is farther continued through the reigns of the Conqueror and his two sons, apparently by another hand; for *Gemmeticensis* dedicates his work to the Conqueror, and Ordericus Vitalis expressly states that he finished it with the battle of Hastings.

## FLORENCE OF WORCESTER.

The earliest of our English chroniclers or annalists, properly so called, who wrote after the Norman Conquest, is commonly held to be the monk Florence of Worcester, whose work, entitled 'Chronicon ex Chronicis' was printed, in 4to., at London, in 1592, under the care of Lord William Howard,\* and reprinted in folio at Francfort in 1601. It extends from the Creation to the year 1119, in which the author died; and there is printed along with it a continuation by another writer to the year 1141. It is, for the greater part, a transcript from the notices of English affairs contained in the General History or Chronology which bears the name of Marianus Scotus, intermixed with a nearly complete transcript of the life of King Alfred by Bishop Asser, and enlarged in the times not treated of

\* This was Lord William Howard, Warden of the Western Marches, the "Belted Will Howard" of border tradition, whose castle of Naworth, in Cumberland, where his bedroom and library were preserved, with the books and furniture, in the same state as when he tenanted the apartments more than two centuries ago, was unhappily consumed the other day by an accidental fire, with all its interesting contents. Such an event is truly a public calamity, a personal loss to the humblest individual in the country; and it is not easy to pardon the carelessness which could have allowed it to take place. At the rate at which the mischief has been allowed to proceed for some time past, the overheating and faulty construction of flues bid fair to leave us in another half century neither ancient building nor ancient record in the land, nor any relic or remnant of the past more than if we were a people of yesterday, or a nation of savages. The universal licence that seems to be given in this matter to every incompetent bricklayer and reckless kitchen-maid amounts almost to wanton or wilful destruction.

in Asser's work by ample translations from the Saxon Chronicle. The Chronicle of Scotus (said to have been of English birth and descended from a relation of Bede) was a favourite book in our monasteries in the middle ages; "there was hardly one in the kingdom," says Bishop Nicolson, "that wanted a copy of it, and some had several." Besides the numerous transcripts, which vary greatly, it has been more than once printed, but never, we believe, in a complete form. Speaking of Florence of Worcester's compilation, the writer of the article in the Quarterly Review, to which we have more than once referred, observes; "Some notices are extracted from Bede. The facts of which the original sources cannot be ascertained are very few, but important, and occur principally in the early part of this history. They are generally of that class which we may suppose to have been derived from the Saxon genealogies. Though the great mass of information afforded by Florence is extant in the Saxon Chronicle, still his work is extremely valuable. He understood the ancient Saxon language well—better, perhaps, than any of his contemporaries; and he has furnished us with an accurate translation from a text which seems to have been the best of its kind." The principal value of Florence's performance in fact consists in its serving as a key to the Saxon Chronicle.

## MATTHEW OF WESTMINSTER.

The Quarterly Reviewer, however, is inclined to think that Florence was preceded by another writer, the author of the compilation entitled '*Flores Historiarum*,' usually ascribed to Matthew of Westminster, who appears to

be a fictitious personage. His English History, which has been brought down by other unknown writers to the year 1307 (or to the end of the reign of Edward I.), is based upon another general chronicle similar to that of Marianus Scotus, with the addition of much matter derived apparently from Anglo-Saxon sources, some of which are now unknown. The writer in the Quarterly Review, who prefers giving the author the name of Florilegus, thinks it probable that his work supplied Florence with certain passages which are not found in the Saxon Chronicle. "Florilegus," he observes, "has retained and quoted a sufficient number of Anglo-Saxonisms, and of Anglo-Saxon phrases, to show that he was in possession of Saxon materials, which he consulted to the best of his ability. He has not used them with the fidelity of Florence of Worcester, for his knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language was imperfect, but still he is not guilty of any intentional falsification, and, therefore, when he relates probable facts, it is fair to conclude that he is equally veracious, although the Saxon original of his Chronicle be not extant." \* The work, under the title of '*Matthæi Westmonasteriensis Flores Historiarum, præcipue de Rebus Britannicis, ab exordio mundi usque ad A.D. 1307,*' was first published by Archbishop Parker, in folio, at London in 1567, and again in 1570; and was reprinted, in folio, at Francfort in 1601, along with Florence of Worcester.

\* Quarterly Review, No. lxvii. p. 282.

## WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY.

The first, in point of merit and eminence, of our Latin historians of this period is William of Malmesbury, so designated as having been a monk of that great monastery, although his proper surname is said to have been Somerset. He was probably born about the time of the Norman Conquest; and, though of English birth, he intimates that he was of Norman descent by one parent, putting in a claim on that ground to be accounted an impartial witness or judge between the two races. Malmesbury's English History consists of two parts, or rather distinct works; the first entitled '*Gesta Regum Anglorum*,' in five books, extending from the arrival of the Saxons to the year 1120; the second entitled '*Historia Novella*,' in three books, bringing the narrative down to 1142. It has been commonly supposed that the author died in that or the following year; but there is no evidence that he did not live to a later date. A portion of the *Gesta* was printed, as the work of an unknown author, in Commeline's volume of British writers, in 1587; both the *Gesta* and the *Historia Novella* are in Savile's Collection, 1596 and 1601; and a new and much more correct edition of the two, by Mr. Thomas Duffus Hardy, in two vols. 8vo., Lon. 1840, forms one of the publications of the Historical Society. There is a very good English translation of William of Malmesbury by the Rev. John Sharpe, 4to., Lon. 1815. Malmesbury, although there is an interval of nearly five hundred years between them, stands next in the order of time after Bede in the series of our historical writers properly so called, as distinguished from

mere compilers and diarists. His histories are throughout original works, and in their degree, artistic compositions. He has evidently taken great pains with the manner as well as with the matter of them. But he also evinces throughout a love of truth as the first quality of historical writing, and far more of critical faculty in separating the probable from the improbable than any other of his monkish brethren of that age who have set up for historians, notwithstanding his fondness for prodigies and ecclesiastical miracles, in which of course he had the ready and all-digestive belief which was universal in his time. Of course, too, he had his partialities in the politics of his own day; and his account of the contest between Matilda and Stephen may be compared with that of the author of the '*Gesta Stephani*' by those who would study both sides of the question. Both his histories are inscribed in very encomiastic dedications to Robert Earl of Gloucester, Matilda's famous champion. Savile's Collection also contains another work of Malmesbury's, his *Lives of the Bishops of England*, '*De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*,' in four books; and a *Life of St. Aldhelm* (Bishop of Sherborn), assumed to be a fifth book of this work, was afterwards published by Gale in his '*Scriptores XV.*' Oxon. 1691, and the same year by Henry Wharton, in the second volume of his '*Anglia Sacra*,' fol., Lon. Gale's volume contains, besides, a *History of the Monastery of Glastonbury* by Malmesbury—'*De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesiæ*;'—and Wharton's contains his *Life of St. Wulstan*: others of his treatises still remain in manuscript.



## EADMER.

The Modern History, or History of His Own Time (*Historia Novorum, sive Sui Seculi*), by his contemporary Eadmer, the monk of Canterbury, is noticed by Malmesbury in the Prologue, or Preface to the First Book of his *Gesta*, as a lucubration written with a sober festivity of style (*sobria sermonis festivitate elucubratum opus*). It has been published (folio, Lon. 1623), with learned annotations by Selden, who holds that in style Eadmer equals Malmesbury, and in the value of his matter excels him. The work is distributed into six books, and comprehends the reigns of the Conqueror and Rufus, and the first twenty-two years of Henry the First (that is, from A.D. 1066 to 1122). One distinction belonging to Eadmer's narrative is, the nearly entire absence of miracles. He probably considered it improper to introduce such high matter into a composition which did not profess to be of a sacred or spiritual nature. Much of his work, however, is occupied with ecclesiastical transactions, which indeed formed almost the entire home politics, and no small part of the foreign politics also, of that age. He has in particular entered largely into the great controversy between the crown and the pope about investiture; and one of the most curious parts of his history is a long and detailed account which he gives of his own appointment to the bishopric of St. Andrews in Scotland, and his contest about his consecration with the stout Scottish king, Alexander I. Mabillon has published a life of St. Wilfrid, by Eadmer, in the '*Acta Sanctorum Benedictinorum* (Sæc. iii. par. i.)

TURGOT AND SIMEON OF DURHAM.—JOHN OF HEXHAM,  
AND RICHARD OF HEXHAM.

Eadmer's immediate predecessor in the see of St. Andrews was Turgot, who had been a monk of Durham, before he was elevated to the primacy of Scotland in 1109. Perhaps the most interesting composition that we have from the pen of Turgot is a life of Malcolm Canmore's queen, Margaret, the sister of Edgar Atheling, whose confessor he was; it was drawn up at the request of her daughter Maud, wife of King Henry I., and is printed in the 'Acta Sanctorum' of the Bollandists.\* But Selden has shown, in his learned Preface to the 'Decem Scriptores,' that the History of the Church of Durham, which passes under the name of Simeon Dunelmensis, and which that monk appears to have published as his own, was really written by Turgot. It is in four books, and extends over the time from A.D. 635 to 1095. This history, along with a continuation to A.D. 1154, and a History of St. Cuthbert, an Epistle respecting the Archbishops of York, a tract on the siege of Durham by the Scots in 969, and a history of English affairs, entitled 'De Regibus Anglorum et Dacorum,' from A.D. 616 to 1129, which, for anything that is known, are really by Simeon, are all in the collection that has just been named.† The English History, which is in

\* Acta Sanct. Junii, pp. 328—535. Papebroch, the editor, has printed the tract, on the authority of the MS. he used, as the work of an unknown monk of the name of Theodoric; but Lord Hailes has adduced sufficient reasons for believing it to be by Turgot, to whom it is ascribed by Fordun. *Annals of Scotland*, i. 36, 37 (edit. of 1819).

† In 1732 there was published at London, in an 8vo. vo-

the form of compendious annals, is continued to 1154, by John Prior of Hexham (Joannes Hagustaldensis), whose Chronicle is published in the same collection ; as are also two books of Lives of the Bishops of Hexham, and an historical fragment on the reign of Stephen from 1135 to 1139, including a narrative of the battle of the Standard, by his successor Prior Richard, together with a short poem in rhyming Latin verses on that battle by Serlo, a monk of Fountain Abbey in Yorkshire.

## AILRED.

But the best account we have of the battle of the Standard is that of Ailred, Abbot of Rievault, in Yorkshire—'Ailredi Abbatis Rievallensis Historia de Bello Standardii'—also printed among the *Scriptores X.*, along with an Epistle on the Genealogy of the English Kings, a Life of Edward the Confessor, and a singular relation, entitled 'De Quodam Miraculo Mirabili,' all by the same writer. Ailred, Ealred, Elred, Alured, Adilred, Ethelred, or Valred, who is supposed to have died about 1166, and who is one of the saints of the Roman calendar (his day is the 12th of January), spent his life in studious retirement, and is the author of many other treatises, some printed in various collections ; some still remaining in manuscript.\* But those that have been mentioned are the only ones that relate to English history. He often

lume, by the Rev. Thomas Bedford, a dissenting clergyman, 'Symeonis Monachi Dunhelmensis Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu Dunelmensis Ecclesiæ, cum Disquisitione de Auctore a Thoma Rud.'

\* The best account of the writings of Ailred is in the *Biographical Dictionary of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.*

writes with considerable animation, and a decided gift of popular eloquence may be discerned in his fluent though not very classical Latin.

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH.—ALFRED OF BEVERLEY.

The famous British History of Geoffrey of Monmouth was printed at Paris, in 4to., in 1508, and again in 1509, and it is also contained in Commeline's Collection, folio, Heidelberg, 1587. It professes to be, and, as already intimated, in all probability is in the main, a translation from a Welsh Chronicle, given to Geoffrey by his friend Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford (a different person from Walter Mapes, the poet, though they have been usually confounded), who had procured the manuscript in Britany. It contains in nine books the history of the Britons, or Welsh, from the era of their leader Brutus, the great-grandson of the Trojan Æneas, to the death, in 688, of their king Cadwallo, or Cadwallader, the same personage called by the Saxon historians Ceadwall, or Ceadwalla, and represented by them as King of Wessex. Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Monmouth, and afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, is a clever and agreeable writer, and his Latin is much more scholarly than that of the generality of the monkish chroniclers of his time. His work, whatever may be thought of its historical value, has at least the merit of having preserved the old legends and traditions of the race who were driven out by the Saxons in a more complete and consistent form than we have them elsewhere. But the outline of the same story in all its parts, from the Trojan descent to the wars of Arthur, is found in Nennius, who lived and wrote certainly not later than the middle of the ninth century, or nearly

three centuries before Geoffrey. The Archdeacon of Monmouth, therefore, was at any rate not the inventor of the fables, if they be such, to which his name has been generally attached. At the most he can only be suspected of having sometimes expanded and embellished them. But, if not the creator of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, Geoffrey was their reviver from almost universal oblivion to sudden and universal notoriety; his book, published probably about 1128, and dedicated to the same Earl of Gloucester whom Malmesbury chose for his patron, obtained immediately the most wonderful currency and acceptance; and from the date of its appearance we find a new inspiration, derived from its pages, pervading the popular literature of Europe. Most of the subsequent Latin chroniclers also adopt more or less of his new version of our early history. An English translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth by Aaron Thompson, originally published in an 8vo. volume at London in 1718, has been lately reprinted, as "revised by J. A. Giles, LL.D.;" and a detailed analysis of his work has been given by the late George Ellis in his 'Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances.'

The compendium of Alfred, Alred, or Alured, canon of the collegiate church of St. John at Beverley, in Yorkshire, published by Hearne, in 8vo., at Oxford in 1716, under the title of '*Aluredi Beverlacensis Annales, sive Historia de Gestis Regum Britanniae, Libris IX.*,' comes down to the year 1129, but is in the first five books (making half the work, which consists only of 152 pages altogether) a mere abridgment of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Alured, in fact, though he does not expressly name the archdeacon, sets out with stating that his design simply

is to epitomise the new History of the Britons, which every body was so eager to read, and of which he had himself for some time in vain sought to procure a copy ; a fact which is strangely suppressed both by Hearne and by Dr. Campbell in the *Biographia Britannica*, in their attempts to show that Alured did not copy Geoffrey, but Geoffrey him. Geoffrey's very expressions are sometimes adopted by Alured. What the latter has added in the continuation of the history down to his own time contains scarcely anything not to be found elsewhere. The period from the Norman Conquest, extending over sixty-two years, which may probably have been about that of his own life, is all comprised in the last book, filling 27 pages.

#### GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS.

Giraldus Cambrensis, another learned Welshman, who makes a principal figure among our historical writers of the twelfth century, is of somewhat later date than his countryman Geoffrey of Monmouth :—Geoffrey died in 1154 ; Giraldus, whose proper Welsh name was Gerald Barry, appears to have been born about 1146. His *Itinerary and Description of Wales* (the first book)—‘*Itinerarium Cambriæ*’ and ‘*Descriptio Cambriæ*’—were published, with learned annotations, by Dr. David Powell, in a 12mo. volume, at London, in 1585 ; both are included in Camden’s *Anglica, Normannica, &c.* together with his *Topography and Conquest of Ireland*—‘*Topographia Hiberniæ*’ and ‘*Expugnatio Hiberniæ*’—there published for the first time ; and a second book of the *Description of Wales*, various biographies of English bishops, an account of his own life, entitled ‘*De Rebus*

a se Gestis,' in three books, together with two separate catalogues of his works drawn up by himself, a treatise concerning the Church of St. Asaph (*De Jure et Statu Menevensis Ecclesiæ Distinctiones vii*), and two or three other short pieces, are in the second volume of Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*. An English translation of the Itinerary and of both parts of the Description of Wales, profusely illuminated with engravings as well as with annotations and commentary, was published by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart., in two vols. 4to., Lon. 1806, under the title of 'The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales, A.D. 1187, by Giraldus de Barri,' and forms one of the most magnificent productions of the modern English press.\* Many other writings, however, both in prose and verse, are attributed to him, which are either lost (if they ever existed), or remain in manuscript, with the exception of a treatise, called by himself '*Gemma Ecclesiastica*,' which is said to have been printed at Mentz without his name in 1549, under the title of '*Gemma Animæ*.' Giraldus, though his style abounds in the conceits and false ornaments which constitute the eloquence of his time, is a very lively writer, and he shows a genius both for narrative and description to which nothing is wanting except the influences of a happier age. In literary ardour and industry, at least, he has not often been surpassed. He "deserves particular regard," says Warton, "for the universality of his works, many of which are written with some degree of elegance. He abounds with quotations of the best Latin poets. He

\* In his Preface Sir Richard seems to state that he had also reprinted the Itinerary and Description of Wales in the original Latin, but we have never seen the book.

was an historian, an antiquary, a topographer, a divine, a philosopher, and a poet. His love of science was so great that he refused two bishoprics; and from the midst of public business, with which his political talents gave him a considerable connexion in the court of Richard the First, he retired to Lincoln for seven years with a design of pursuing theological studies.\* The fancy of Giraldus, however, it must be confessed, was more vigorous than either his judgment or his veracity; and much of the matter in his historical works would have suited poetry better than history.

#### HENRY OF HUNTINGDON.

Malmesbury's two histories are followed in Savile's collection by the Eight Books of that of Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, extending from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the accession of Henry II. (A.D. 1154). The work has not been elsewhere printed. Henry of Huntingdon first distinguished himself as a poet, and is said by Leland to have in the earlier part of his life written eight books of Latin epigrams, eight more of love verses, besides a long didactic poem on herbs, another on spices, and a third on precious stones. His history, which he composed in his more advanced years, is interspersed with a good deal of verse, most of it professing to be quoted, but some of it confessedly his own. Savile describes him as, in respect of historical merit, although separated by a long interval from Malmesbury, yet making as near an approach to him as any other writer of the time, and as deserving to be placed in the first rank of the most diligent explorers and most truthful expounders

\* Dissertation of Introd. of Learning, p. clviii.



of the times preceding their own. He is indeed more of an antiquarian than an historian. His work, in so far as it is a history of his own time, is of little importance. The writer in the *Quarterly Review*, however, remarks that it is a more ambitious attempt than had been made by such mere annalists as the Saxon chroniclers on the one hand, or such compilers as Florence of Worcester and Simeon of Durham on the other. "Abandoning the simple plan of his predecessors, he divided his history into books, treating distinctly upon each of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, until their union under Edgar. Huntingdon states that, taking Bede as his basis, he added much from other sources, and borrowed from the chronicles which he found in ancient libraries. His descriptions of battles are often more diffuse than in the Anglo-Saxon chronicles. It has been supposed that, because these scenes and pictures are not warranted by the existing texts, they are mere historical amplifications; but we find no difficulty in believing that the researches of a writer who was considered as a most learned antiquarian should have enabled him to discover a chronicle lost to us, and which contained more fragments of poetry or poetical prose than the chronicles which have been preserved."\* The second volume of Wharton's *Anglia Sacra* contains a long letter from Henry of Huntingdon to his friend Walter, Abbot of Ramsay (*De Episcopis sui temporis*), which is full of interesting notices and anecdotes of the kings, prelates, and other distinguished personages of his time.

\* *Quarterly Review*, xxxiv., 283.

## ROGER DE HOVEDEN.

The next work printed in Savile's Collection (and his edition is again our only one) is the copious Chronicle of Roger de Hoveden (probably so designated from having been a native of Hoveden, or Howden, in Yorkshire). It fills 430 pages, or not much less than half the volume. Hoveden takes up the narrative at the year 732, where the History of Bede (a north-countryman like himself) ends, and brings it down to 1202. His account is particularly full throughout the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I., and the commencement of that of John, making together what may be called his own half century. The greater portion, indeed, of the 340 pages of which this second or latter part of his annals—'Annalium Pars Posterior'—consists, is occupied by letters of kings, popes, and prelates, and other public documents; but it contains also an extraordinary number of minute historical details. Hoveden is of all our old chroniclers the most of a matter-of-fact man; he indulges occasionally in an epithet, rarely or never in a reflection; his one notion of writing history seems to be to pack as many particulars as possible into a given space, giving one the notion in perusing his close array of dates and items that he had felt continually pressed by the necessity of economising his paper or parchment. It is true that he has no notion of the higher economy of discrimination and selection; but among the multitude of facts of all kinds that crowd his pages are many that are really curious and illustrative.

## WILLIAM OF NEWBURGH.

William of Newburgh (in Latin Gulielmus Neubrigensis), so called from the monastery of Newburgh, in Yorkshire, to which he belonged,—although his proper name is said to have been Little, whence he sometimes designates himself Petit, or Parvus,—has had the luck to have the five books of his English History from the Conquest to the year 1197 printed separately more than once; first in 12mo., at Antwerp in 1597; a second time, with notes by J. Picard, in 8vo., at Paris in 1610; and again, under the care of the industrious Thomas Hearne, in 3 vols. 8vo., at Oxford in 1719. It is also in the collection of Jerome Commelinus. The work of Neubrigensis is much more what we now understand by a history than those of either Hoveden or Huntingdon; in the superior purity of its Latinity it ranks with that of Malmesbury; and it has the same comparatively artistic character in other respects. But his merit lies rather in his manner than in his matter; he has disposed the chief events of the times of which he treats into a regular and readable narrative, but has not contributed many new facts. He is famous as having been, so far as is known, the first writer after Geoffrey of Monmouth who refused to adopt the story of the Trojan descent of the old Britons, and the other “figments,” as he calls them, of the Welsh historians, which moreover he accuses Geoffrey of having made still more absurd and monstrous by his own “impudent and impertinent lies.” Whether he knew enough of the original chronicle which Geoffrey professed to translate, or of the language in which it was written, to be entitled to express an opinion upon this latter point,

does not appear. The Welsh maintain that he had a personal spite at their whole nation: "This William," says Dr. Powell, "put in for the bishopric of St. Asaph upon the death of the said Geoffrey, and, being disappointed, fell into a mad humour of decrying the whole principality of Wales, its history, antiquity, and all that belongs to it." It must be admitted, too, that, if not guilty of the same dishonesty and forgery which he imputes to Geoffrey, William of Newburgh is himself, in credulity at least, a match for the most fabulous of our old chroniclers.

**BENEDICTUS ABBAS.—RALPH DE DICETO.—GERVASE OF  
CANTERBURY.**

One of the most valuable of our chronicles of the twelfth century is that of the Abbot Benedict, embracing the space from A.D. 1170 to 1192, which was published by Hearne in 2 vols. 8vo., at Oxford in 1735, under the title of '*Benedictus Abbas Petroburgensis de Vita et Rebus Gestis Henrici II. et Ricardi I.*' Benedict, though a partizan of Becket, and one of his biographers, was so highly esteemed by Henry II., who had both the eye to discern and the magnanimity to appreciate merit and ability wherever they were to be found, that he was by his direction elected Abbot of Peterborough in 1177; and in 1191, after Richard had come to the throne, he was advanced to be Keeper of the great seal, in which high office he died in 1193.

Ralph de Diceto, Archdeacon of London, who probably died soon after the commencement of the thirteenth century, is the author of two chronicles; the first entitled '*Abbreviationes Chronicorum*,' and extending from A.D.

589 to 1148; the second, continuing the narrative, upon a larger scale, to A.D. 1199. Both are published in the Collection of the 'Scriptores X.,' where they occupy together not quite 300 columns. They are followed by a brief outline of the course of the controversy between King Henry and Becket—'Series Causæ inter Henricum Regem et Thomam Archiepiscopum'—which may also perhaps have been drawn up by Diceto. A compendium of the early British history from Brutus to the death of Cadwallader, after Geoffrey of Monmouth, by this writer (*Historia Compendiosa de Regibus Britonum*), is given in his collection entitled 'Scriptores XV.' by Gale, who says that he had seen a better manuscript of the 'Abbreviationes Chronicorum' than that used by Twysden. He adds a short tract of two or three pages from a manuscript in the Arundel Collection (now in the British Museum) entitled 'De Partitione Provinciæ in Schiras et Episcopatus et Regna,' which he entitles as by Diceto, although in his preface he describes it as by an unknown writer. There is a short history of the Archbishops of Canterbury to the year 1200 by this Diceto in the second volume of Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*. Bishop Nicolson complains of it as not only of little value, from its brevity, but as "stuffed with matters foreign to the purpose."

The Chronicle of Gervase of Canterbury—'Gervasii Monachi Dorobernensis, sive Cantuarensis, Chronica'—from the accession of Henry I. in A.D. 1100 (or 1122 as he reckons, "secundum Evangelium") to the end of the reign of Richard I. and of the century, is published in the collection of the 'Scriptores X.' (col. 1338-1628); together with three shorter pieces by the same writer:—

the first, an account of the burning, A.D. 1174, and subsequent restoration of Canterbury Cathedral (*Tractatus de Combustione et Reparatione Dorobernensis Ecclesiæ*); the second, on the contest between the monks of Canterbury and Archbishop Baldwin (*Imaginationes de Discordiis inter Monachos Cantuarienses et Archiepiscopum Baldwinum*); the third, a history of the Archbishops of Canterbury (*Actus Pontificum Cantuariensis Ecclesiæ*) from Augustine to Hubert Walter, who died in 1205, and whom Gervase probably did not long survive. Leland, who gives this writer a high character for his diligent study and accurate and extensive knowledge of the national antiquities, speaks of his *History* as commencing with the earliest British times, and including the whole of the Saxon period ("tum Britannorum ab origine historiam, tum Saxonum et Normannorum fortia facta deduxit"). He takes great pains in the portion we have of it to present a correct and distinct chronology; but it is principally occupied with ecclesiastical affairs.

VINESAUF.—RICHARD OF DEVICES.—JOSCELIN DE BRAKE-  
LONDA.

An account of the expedition of Richard Cœur de Lion to the Holy Land, in six books, by Geoffrey Vinesauf, has been published under the title of '*Itinerarium Regis Anglorum Richardi, et aliorum, in terram Hierosolymorum*,' by Gale in his '*Scriptores Quinque*' (pp. 245—429). A portion of the same work had been previously printed by Bongarsius in his '*Gesta Dei per Francos*,' 1611, as a Fragment of the *History of Jerusalem* (*Hierosolimitanæ Historiæ Fragmentum*) from A.D. 1171 to 1190, by an unknown writer, probably an Englishman.

Geoffrey, or Walter, Vinisauf, or Vinsaufe, or Vinesalf (in Latin *de Vino Salvo*), was an Englishman by birth, although of Norman parentage, and accompanied Richard on his crusade. His prose is spirited and eloquent, and he was also one of the best Latin poets of his day. His principal poetical work, entitled '*De Nova Poetria*' (On the New Poetry), has been several times printed: it "is dedicated," Warton observes, "to Pope Innocent the Third; and its intention was to recommend and illustrate the new and legitimate mode of versification which had lately begun to flourish in Europe, in opposition to the Leonine or barbarous species." This work, published soon after the death of King Richard, contains an elaborate lamentation over that event, which is quoted in what is called *Bromton's Chronicle* \* (written in the reign of Edward III.), and, as both Camden † and Selden ‡ have noted, is referred to by Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*, § although only the latter seems to have understood the delicate ridicule of the allusion. The "craft of Galfride" (so he names Vinesauf) is also celebrated by the great English poet, apparently with less irreverence, in his *Court of Love*, || no doubt composed at a much less advanced period of his life.

Another valuable contemporary history of the early part of the reign of Richard the First (from A.D. 1189 to 1192), comprehending the transactions in England as well as abroad, the *Chronicle of Richard of Devises*,

\* In the *Scriptores X.* col. 1280. The author's name is misprinted *Galfridus de Nine Salvo*.

† *Remains*, 7th edit. p. 414.

‡ *Præfat. ad Scriptores X.* p. xli.

§ *Nonne's Preestis Tale*, v. 15,353, &c.

|| v. 11.

has lately been printed for the first time by the Historical Society:—‘*Chronicon Ricardi Divisiensis de Rebus Gestis Ricardi Primi, Regis Angliæ; nunc primum typis mandatum, curante Josepho Stevenson;*’ 8vo., Lon. 1838. *Divisiensis* appears to have written before either Diceto or Hoveden, and his work forms therefore an authority additional to and quite independent of theirs.

Finally, we ought not to omit to mention the singularly curious Chronicle of Jocelin de Brakelonda, lately printed by the Camden Society—‘*Chronica Jocelini de Brakelonda, de Rebus Gestis Samsonis Abbatis Monasterii Sancti Edmundi; nunc primum typis mandata, curante Johanne Gage Rokewode;*’ 4to., Lon. 1840—which, although professing to record only the acts of Abbot Samson and the history of the monastery of St. Edmundsbury, includes also several notices of the public affairs of the kingdom, as well as lets us see farther into the system of English life and society in that remote time than perhaps any other record that has come down to us. It embraces the space from 1173 to 1202, comprehending the last sixteen years of the reign of Henry II., the whole of that of Richard I., and the first three years of that of John. It contains repeated personal notices of all these three kings.

#### MONASTIC REGISTERS.

Among the contemporary historical monuments of this age are also to be reckoned parts at least of several of the monastic registers, compiled by a succession of writers, which have been published;—such as that of Melrose, extending from A.D. 735 to 1270 (in Fulman, 1684); that of Margan, from 1066 to 1232 (in Gale, 1687); that of



Waverley,\* from 1066 to 1291 (in the same collection); those of Ramsay and Ely, both, as far as printed, coming down to the Conquest (the former in Gale, 1691, the latter in the same collection, and also, in part, in the second *Seculum* of Mabillon's *Acta Sanctorum Benedictinorum*); that of Ely by the Priors Thomas and Richard, from A.D. 156 to 1169 (in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*); those of Holyrood, from A.D. 596 to 1163, and of Abingdon, from 870 to 1131, and the History of the Bishops and Church of Durham from A.D. 633 to 1214 (all in the same collection). To these may be added some of the tracts relating to the great monastery of Peterborough in Sparke's collection; and several lives of prelates by Malmesbury, Goscelin of Canterbury, Osbern, John of Salisbury, Eadmer, &c., in Wharton. The Annals of the Monastery of Burton, in Staffordshire, from A.D. 1004 to 1263, and the continuation of the History of England, from 1149 to 1470 (both in Fulman), appear to be throughout compilations of a later date. The venerable collection of ancient monuments relating to the church of Rochester and the kingdom of Kent, entitled the '*Textus Roffensis*,' which was published by Hearne, in 8vo., at Oxford in 1720, was drawn up by Bishop Ernulfus, who presided over the see of Rochester from A.D. 1115 till his death in 1124; and Heming's Chartulary of the Church of Worcester—'*Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiæ Wigorniensis*'—published by Hearne in two vols. 8vo. in 1723, is of still earlier date, having been compiled in the reign of the Conqueror.

\* We may remark, however, that the passage from the earlier portion of the Waverley Annals, which Gale quotes in proof of the writer having lived at the time of the Conquest, appears to be merely a translation from the Saxon Chronicle.

LAW TREATISES.—DOMESDAY BOOK.—PUBLIC ROLLS AND  
REGISTERS.

We may close the account of the numerous historical writings of the first century and a half after the Conquest by merely noticing, that to the same period belong the earliest work on the common law of England, the '*Tractatus de Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliæ*,' commonly ascribed to the chief justiciary Ranulf de Glanvil, which was first printed in 4to. at London in 1673, and of which there is an English translation, with notes, by Mr. John Beames, 8vo. Lon. 1812; the '*Liber Niger*,' or Black Book of the Exchequer, supposed to have been compiled by Gervase of Tilbury (*Gervasius Tilburiensis*), who according to some authorities was a nephew of King Henry II., of which there is an edition by Hearne, 2 vols. 8vo. Oxford, 1728, reprinted at London in 1771; and the '*Dialogus de Scaccario*,' or Dialogue respecting the Exchequer, probably written by Richard Fitz-Nigel, or Fitz-Neale, Bishop of London from A.D. 1189 to 1198, which is printed at the end of Madox's History of the Exchequer, 4to. Lon. 1711, and again 2 vols. 4to. 1769; and of which there is an English translation, 4to. Lon. 1756. Along with these text-books of English law may be noticed the book of the laws and legal usages of the duchy of Normandy, called the '*Coutumes de Normandie*,' of which there are editions of 1681, 1684, 1694, and 1709, all printed at Rouen, and each in 2 volumes folio. It hardly belongs to our subject to mention the most venerable of all national registers, the Domesday Book of the Conqueror, printed at London in 1783, in 2 volumes, folio, under the title of '*Domesday Book, seu*

*Liber Censualis Willelmi Primi Regis Angliæ inter Archivos Regni in Domo Capitulari Westmonasterii conservatus;* the Indices printed in 1811, and the additional volume printed in 1816 containing the Exon Domesday, the *Inquisitio Eliensis*, the Book of Winchester, and the Boldon Book; the public documents appertaining to the present period in the Statutes of the Realm, the *Fœdera*, the Calendar of Patent Rolls in the Tower, the Calendar of Rolls, Charters, and Inquisitions ad quod damnum, the *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, the *Rotuli Literarum Patentium*, the *Rotuli Literarum Clausarum*, the Great Rolls of the Pipe of the 31st of Henry I. and of the 3rd of John, the *Rotuli Normanniæ*, the *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus*, the *Fines in Curia Domini Regis*, the *Rotuli Curie Regis*, the Charter Rolls of John, the Ancient Laws and Institutes of England from Æthelbert to Henry I., and perhaps one or two other publications of the late Record Commission; the *Concilia* of Spelman, and of Wilkins, &c.

#### THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND.

It is commonly stated that for some reigns after the Norman Conquest the exclusive language of government and legislation in England was the French,—that all pleadings, at least in the supreme courts, were carried on in that language,—and that in it all deeds were drawn up and all laws promulgated. “This popular notion,” observes a learned living writer, “cannot be easily supported. . . . Before the reign of Henry III. we cannot discover a deed or law drawn or composed in French. Instead of prohibiting the English language, it was employed by the Conqueror and his successors in their

charters until the reign of Henry II., when it was superseded not by the French, but by the Latin language, which had been gradually gaining, or rather regaining, ground; for the charters anterior to Alfred are invariably in Latin." \* So far was the Conqueror from showing any aversion to the English language, or making any such attempt as is ascribed to him to effect its abolition, that, according to Ordericus Vitalis, when he first came over he strenuously applied himself to learn it for the special purpose of understanding, without the aid of an interpreter, the causes that were pleaded before him, and persevered in that endeavour till the tumult of many other occupations, and what the historian calls "*durior ætas*"—a more iron time†—of necessity compelled him to give it up.‡ The common statement rests on the more than suspicious authority of the History attributed to Ingulphus, the fabricator of which, in his loose and ignorant account of the matter, has set down this falsehood along with some other things that are true or probable. Even before the Conquest, the Confessor himself, according to this writer, though a native of England, yet, from his education and long residence in Normandy, had become almost a Frenchman; and when he succeeded to the English throne he brought over with him great numbers of Normans, whom he advanced to the highest dignities in the church and the state. "Wherefore," it is added, "the whole land began, under the influence of the king and the other Normans introduced

\* Sir Francis Palgrave, *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 56.

† *Quid nos dura refugimus ætas?*—Hor. Od. i. 35.

‡ *Excerpta ex Libro iv. Orderici Vitalis*, p. 247; edit. Maseres.

by him, to lay aside the English customs, and to imitate the manners of the French in many things ; for example, all the nobility in their courts began to speak French as a great piece of gentility, to draw up their charters and other writings after the French fashion, and to grow ashamed of their old national habits in these and in many other particulars.”\* Further on we are told, “ They [the Normans] held the language [of the natives] in such abhorrence that the laws of the land and the statutes of the English kings were drawn out in the Gallic [or French] tongue ; and to boys in the schools the elements of grammar were taught in French and not in English ; even the English manner of writing was dropped, and the French manner introduced in all charters and books.”† The facts are more correctly given by other old writers, who, although not contemporary with the Conquest, are probably of as early a date as the compiler of the Croyland History. The Dominican friar Robert Holcot, writing in the earlier part of the fourteenth century, informs us that there was then no institution of children in the old English—that the first language they learned was the French, and that through that tongue they were afterwards taught Latin ; and he adds that this was a practice which had been introduced at the Conquest, and which had continued ever since.‡ About the middle of the same century Ranulf Higden, in his Polychronicon, says, as the passage is translated by Trevisa, “ This apayringe (diminution) of the birthe tonge is by

\* *Ingulphi Historia*, in Savile, 895 ; or in Fulman, 62. The translation, which is sufficiently faithful, is Henry's.

† *Id.* Savile, 901 ; Fulman, 71.

‡ *Lect. in Libr. Sapient.*, *Lect. ii.*, 4to. Paris, 1518 ; as referred to by Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, i. 5.

cause of twey thinges ; oon is for children in scole, azenes (against) the usage and maner of alle other naciouns, beth (be) compelled for to leve her (their) owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessonns and her thingis a Frenshe, and haveth sithe (have since) that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth ytautz (be taught) for to speke Frenshe from the tyme that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and cunneth (can) speke and playe with a childis brooche ; and uplondish (rustic) men wole likne hem self (will liken themselves) to gentlemen, and fondeth (are fond) with grete besynesse for to speke Frenshe, for to be the more ytold of."\* The teachers in the schools, in fact, were generally, if not universally, ecclesiastics ; and the Conquest had Normanized the church quite as much as the state. Immediately after that revolution great numbers of foreigners were brought over, both to serve in the parochial cures and to fill the monasteries that now began to multiply so rapidly. These churchmen must have been in constant intercourse with the people of all classes in various capacities, not only as teachers of youth, but as the instructors of their parishioners from the altar, and as holding daily and hourly intercourse with them in all the relations that subsist between pastor and flock. They probably in this way diffused their own tongue throughout the land of their adoption to a greater extent than is commonly suspected. We shall have occasion, as we proceed, to mention some facts which seem to imply that in the twelfth century the French language was generally familiar to the people of all classes in England, at least in

\* Quoted from MS. Harleian. 1900, by Tyrwhitt, in Essay on Language and Versification of Chaucer, prefixed to his edition of the Canterbury Tales.

the great towns. It was at any rate the only language spoken for some ages after the Conquest by our kings, and not only by nearly all the nobility, but by a large proportion even of the inferior landed proprietors, most of whom were also of Norman birth or descent. Ritson, in his rambling, incoherent 'Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy,' prefixed to his 'Ancient English Metrical Romances,' has collected, but not in the most satisfactory manner, some of the evidence we have as to the speech of the first Norman kings. He does not notice what Ordericus Vitalis tells us of the Conqueror's meritorious attempt, which does not seem, however, to have been more successful than such experiments on the part of grown-up gentlemen usually are ; so that he may be allowed to be correct enough in the assertion with which he sets out, that we have no information "that William the Bastard, his son Rufus, his daughter Maud, or his nephew Stephen, did or could speak the Anglo-Saxon or English language." Reference is then made to a story told in what is called Brompton's Chronicle respecting Henry II., which, however, is not very intelligible in all its parts, though Ritson has slurred over the difficulties. As Henry was passing through Wales, the old chronicler relates, on his return from Ireland in the spring of 1172, he found himself on a Sunday at the castle of Cardiff, and stopped there to hear mass ; after which, as he was proceeding to mount his horse to be off again, there presented itself before him a somewhat singular apparition, a man with red hair and a round tonsure,\* lean and tall, attired in a white tunic and barefoot,

\* *Tonsura rotunda.* *Scriptores Decem*, 1079. The epithet would seem to imply that there were still in Wales

who, addressing him in the Teutonic tongue, began, "Gode olde kinge," and proceeded to deliver a command from Christ, as he said, and his mother, from John the Baptist and Peter, that he should suffer no traffic or servile works to be done throughout his dominions on the sabbath-day, except only such as pertained to the use of food; "which command, if thou observest," concluded the speaker, "whatever thou mayst undertake thou shalt happily accomplish." The king immediately, speaking in French, desired the soldier who held the bridle of his horse to ask the rustic if he had dreamed all this. The soldier made the inquiry, as desired, in English; and then, it is added, the man replied in the same language as before, and addressing the king said, "Whether I have dreamed it or no, mark this day; for, unless thou shalt do what I have told thee, and amend thy life, thou shalt within a year's time hear such news as thou shalt mourn to the day of thy death." And, having so spoken, the man vanished out of sight. With the calamities which of course ensued to the doomed king we have here nothing to do. Although the chronicler reports only the three commencing words of the prophet's first address in what he calls the Teutonic tongue, there can be no doubt, we conceive, that the rest, though here translated into Latin, was also delivered in the same Teutonic (by which is plainly meant Saxon or English). The man would not begin his speech in one language, and then suddenly break away into another. But, if this was the case, Henry, from his reply, would appear to have

some priests of the ancient British Church who retained the old national crescent-shaped tonsure, now deemed heretical.



understood English, though he might not be able to speak it. The two languages, thus subsisting together, were probably in general both understood even by those who could only speak one of them. We have another evidence of this in the fact of the soldier, as we have seen, speaking English and also understanding the king's French. It is, we suppose, merely so much affectation or bad rhetoric in the chronicler that makes him vary his phrase for the same thing from "the Teutonic tongue" (*Teutonica lingua*) in one place to "English" (*Anglicè*) in another, and immediately after to "the former language" (*lingua priori*); for the words which he gives as Teutonic are English words, and when Henry desired the soldier to address the priest in English and the soldier did so, it must have been because that was the language in which he had addressed the king.

"King Richard," Ritson proceeds, "is never known to have uttered a single English word, unless one may rely on the evidence of Robert Mannyng for the express words, when, of Isaac King of Cyprus, 'O dele,' said the king, 'this is a fole Breton.' The latter expression seems proverbial, whether it alludes to the Welsh or to the Armoricans, because Isaac was neither by birth, though he might be both by folly. Many great nobles of England, in this century, were utterly ignorant of the English language." As an instance, he mentions the case, before noticed by Tyrwhitt, of William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, chancellor and prime minister to Richard I., who, according to a remarkable account in a letter of his contemporary Hugh Bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden, did not know a word of English."\*

\* Linguam Anglicanam prorsus ignorabat.—*Hoveden*,

The only fact relating to this subject in connexion with John or his reign that Ritson brings forward, is the speech which that king's ambassadors, as related by Matthew Paris, made to the King of Morocco :—" Our nation is learned in three idioms, that is to say, Latin, French, and English." \* This would go to support the conclusion that both the French and the Latin languages were at this time commonly spoken by persons of education in England.

#### THE LANGUE D'OC AND THE LANGUE D'OYL.

But, however that may have been, the French as well as the Latin was at least extensively employed in literary composition. The Gauls, the original inhabitants of the country now called France, were a Celtic people, and their speech was a dialect of the same great primitive tongue which probably at one time prevailed over the whole of Western Europe, and is still vernacular in Ireland, in Wales, and among the Highlanders of Scotland. After the country became a Roman province this ancient language gradually gave place to the Latin; which,

704.—Ritson, omitting all mention either of Hoveden or Tyrwhitt, chooses to make a general reference to the chronicle called Brompton's, a later compilation, the author of which (vide col. 1227) has quietly appropriated Bishop Hugh's Letter, and made it part of his narrative.

\* This was a secret mission dispatched by John, the historian tells us, in 1213, " ad Admiralium Murmelium, regem magnum Aphricæ, Marrochiæ, et Hispaniæ, quem vulgus Miramumelinum vocat." The words used by Thomas Herdington, the one of the three commissioners selected, on account of his superior gift of eloquence, to be spokesman, were " Gens nostra speciosa et ingeniosa tribus pollet idiomatibus erudita, scilicet Latino, Gallico, et Anglico."—*Mat. Paris*, 243.

however, here as elsewhere, soon became corrupted in the mouths of a population mixing it with their own barbarous vocables and forms, or at least divesting it of many of its proper characteristics in their rude appropriation of it. But, as different depraving or obliterating influences operated in different circumstances, and a variety of kinds of bad Latin were thus produced in the several countries which had been provinces of the empire, so even within the limits of Gaul there grew up two such distinct dialects, one in the south, another in the north. All these forms of bastard Latin, wherever they arose, whether in Italy, in Spain, or in Gaul, were known by the common name of Roman, or Romance, languages, or the Rustic Roman (*Romana Rustica*), and were by that generic term distinguished from the barbarian tongues, or those that had been spoken by the Celtic, German, and other uncivilized nations before they came into communication with the Romans. From them have sprung what are called the Latin languages of modern Europe—the Italian, the Spanish, and the Portuguese, as well as what we now denominate the French. The Romance spoken in the south of Gaul appears to have been originally nearly, if not altogether, identical with that spoken in the north-west of Spain; and it always preserved a close resemblance and affinity to that and the other Romance dialects of Spain and Italy. It is in fact to be accounted a nearer relation of the Spanish and Italian than of the modern French. The latter is exclusively the offspring of the Romance of northern Gaul, which, both during its first growth and subsequently, was acted upon by different influences from those which modified the formation of the southern

tongue. It is probable that whatever it retained of the Celtic ingredient to begin with was, if not stronger or of larger quantity than what entered into the Romance dialect of the south, at any rate of a somewhat different character; but the peculiar form it eventually assumed may be regarded as having been mainly owing to the foreign pressure to which it was twice afterwards exposed, first by the settlement of the Franks in the north and north-east of Gaul in the fifth century (while the Visigoths and Burgundians had spread themselves over the south), and again by that of the Normans in the north-west in the tenth. What may have been the precise nature or amount of the effect produced upon the Romance tongue of Northern Gaul by either or both of these Teutonic occupations of the country it is not necessary for our present purpose to inquire; it is sufficient to observe that that dialect could not fail to be thereby peculiarly affected, and its natural divergence from the southern Romance materially aided and promoted. The result, in fact, was that the two dialects became two distinct languages, differing from one another more than any two other of the Latin languages did—the Italian, for example, from the Spanish, or the Spanish from the Portuguese, and even more than the Romance of the south of Gaul differed from that either of Italy or of Spain. This southern Romance, it only remains further to be observed, came in course of time to be called the Provençal tongue; but it does not appear to have received this name till, in the beginning of the twelfth century, the county of Provence had fallen to be inherited by Raymond Berenger, Count of Catalonia, who thereupon transferred his court to Arles, and made that town

the centre and chief seat of the literary cultivation which had previously flourished at Barcelona. There had been poetry written in the Romance of Southern Gaul before this; but it was not till now that the Troubadours, as the authors of that poetry called themselves, rose into much celebrity; and hence it has been maintained, with great appearance of reason, that what is best or most characteristic about the Provençal poetry is really not of French but of Spanish origin. In that case the first inspiration may probably have been caught from the Arabs. The greater part of Provence soon after passed into the possession of the Counts of Toulouse, and the troubadours flocked to that city; but the glory of the Provençal tongue did not last altogether for much more than a century; and then, when it had ceased to be employed in poetry and literature, and had declined into a mere provincial patois, it and the northern French were wont to be severally distinguished by the names of the Langue d'Oc (sometimes called by modern writers the Occitanian) and the Langue d'Oyl, from the two words for *yes*, which were *oc* (probably the Latin *hoc*) in the one, and *oyl* (probably *ille*, or rather *illud*), afterwards *oy* or *oui*, in the other. Dante mentions them by these appellations, and with this explanation, in his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, written in the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century; and one of them still gives its name to the great province of Languedoc, where the dialect formerly so called yet subsists as the popular speech, though, of course, much changed and debased from what it was in the days of its old renown, when it lived on the lips of rank and genius and beauty, and was the favourite vehicle of love and song.

The Langue d'Oyl, on the other hand, formerly spoken only to the north of the Loire, has<sup>e</sup> grown up into what we now call the French language, and has become, at least for literary purposes, and for all the educated classes, the established language of the whole country. Some fond students of the remains of the other dialect have deplored this result as a misfortune to France, which they contend would have had a better modern language and literature if the Langue d'Oc, in the contest between the two, had prevailed over the Langue d'Oyl. It is probable, indeed, that accident and political circumstances have had more to do in determining the matter as it has gone than the merits of the case; but in every country as well as in France—in Spain, in Italy, in Germany, in England—some other of the old popular dialects than the one that has actually acquired the ascendancy has in like manner had its enthusiastic reclaimers against the unjust fortune which has condemned it to degradation or oblivion; and we may suspect that the partiality which the mind is apt to acquire for whatever it has made the subject of long investigation and study, especially if it be something which has been generally neglected, and perhaps in some instances a morbid sympathy with depression and defeat, which certain historical and philosophical speculators have in common with the readers and writers of sentimental novels, are at the bottom of much of this unavailing and purposeless lamentation. The question is one as to which we have hardly the means of arriving at a conclusion, even if any conclusion which might now be established could have any practical effect. The Langue d'Oyl is now unalterably established as the French language; the Langue d'Oc is,

except as a local patois, irrecoverably dead. Nor are there wanting French archæologists, quite equal in knowledge of the subject to their opponents, who maintain that in this there is nothing to regret, but the contrary—that the northern Romance tongue was as superior to the southern intrinsically as it has proved in fortune, and that its early literature was of far higher value and promise than the Provençal.\*

NORMAN TROUVEURS :—DUKE RICHARD I.—THIBAUT DE VERNON—TAILLEFER—CHANSON DE ROLAND.

Be that as it may, it is this early literature of the Langue d'Oyl which is for us in England of most interest. It is, in fact, in a manner a part of our own. Not only did it spring up, and for a long time flourish exclusively, among those same wonderful Normans whose greatest and most enduring dominion has been established in this island; the greater part of it appears to have been produced not in France, but in England. This has been shown by the late Abbé de la Rue, the first writer by whom the history of the poetry of the Trouvères, or

\* What has come to be called the French tongue, it may be proper to notice, has no relationship whatever to that of the proper French, or Franks, who were a Teutonic people, speaking a purely Teutonic language, resembling the German, or more nearly the Flemish. This old Teutonic French, which the Franks continued to speak for several centuries after their conquest of Gaul, is denominated by philologists the *Frankish*, or *Francic*. The modern French, which is a Latin tongue, has come to be so called, from the accident of the country in which it was spoken having been conquered by the French or Franks—the conquerors, as in other cases, in course of time adopting the language of the conquered, and bestowing upon it their own name.

northern Troubadours, was accurately investigated, in a series of dissertations published in 1796 and 1797, in the twelfth and thirteenth volumes of the *Archæologia*, or *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries*, and subsequently, at more length and with more elaborate research, in his valuable work entitled '*Essais Historiques sur les Bardes, les Jongleurs, et les Trouvères Normands et Anglo-Normands*;' 3 vols. 8vo., Caen, 1834.

The earliest recorded writer of French verse appears to be Richard I., Duke of Normandy, the natural but only son of William I., son and successor of Rollo, the great founder of the duchy. Richard, who afterwards acquired for himself the surname of *Sans-peur* (the Fearless), was born in 933, was recognised as duke on the death of his father, ten years after, and died, after a glorious reign of more than half a century, in 996. Of his poetry, however, nothing remains except the fame, preserved in the writings of another Trouvère of the next age. Richard, it may be observed, had been sent by his father to be educated at Bayeux, where the Danish language was still spoken, instead of at Rouen, the capital of the duchy, where even already, only a generation after the arrival of the Normans, they or their children, as well as the native population, spoke only French; and his taste for poetry is said to have been first awakened by the songs of the land of his ancestors. Much of the peculiar character, indeed, of the early northern French poetry betokens a Scandinavian inspiration. With this influence was probably combined that of the old Celtic poetry of Britany, or Armorica, of which the country now called Normandy had been originally a part, and with which it still continued to be intimately connected.



In this way may be reconciled the various theories that have been proposed on the subject of the origin of romantic poetry and fiction in Europe; one deducing it from a Scandinavian, another from a Celtic, a third from an Oriental source; and each, separately looked at, appearing to support itself by facts and considerations of great force. When these several theories were advanced in opposition to one another by ingenious and more or less well-informed speculators of the last century, the distinction between the early language and poetry of the south and those of the north of France had been little attended to, and was very imperfectly understood. Had the love-songs of the Provençal Troubadours, and the lays and tales of the Norman Trouvères, not been confounded together, it might have been perceived that both the internal and the external evidence concurred in assigning, in great part at least, a Saracenic origin to the former, and a mixed Scandinavian and Armorican parentage to the latter.

Another early Norman Trouvère, whose name only has been preserved, is Thibaut de Vernon, who was a canon of Rouen in the early part of the eleventh century, or in the age intermediate between that of Duke Richard Sans-peur and that of the Conqueror. A collection of fifty-nine old French Lives of Saints, of which three are in verse and the rest in prose, has been attributed to De Vernon; but erroneously, as is shown by M. de la Rue. What he really wrote was a verse Life of St. Vandrille (the Abbot Wandregisilus), which appears to be lost.

The renowned minstrel Taillefer, who struck the first blow at the battle of Hastings, is described by his coun-

tryman Wace, in the next century, as having dashed on horseback among the ranks of the Saxons, to meet his glorious death, singing of Charlemagne and Roland and Oliver, and the other peers who died at Roncesvaux :—

De Karlemaigne et de Rollant,  
E d'Oliver, et des vassals,  
Cy morurent en Roncesvals.

Various pieces of ancient verse have been from time to time produced, claiming to be this Song of Roland (as it is styled by several later chroniclers); and it has been generally assumed that it was a short lyrical strain, and a composition of Taillefer's own. Lately, however, much attention has been attracted to a long poem, of nearly three hundred stanzas, or some three thousand lines, which M. Francisque Michel has published, from the manuscript in the Bodleian Library, under the title of 'La Chanson de Roland, ou de Roncevaux' (8vo., Paris, 1837), and which he contends is the true old epic of which a portion was recited by Taillefer on this occasion. The existence of this poem was, we believe, first pointed out in a note to his edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (v. 13,741), by Tyrwhitt, so many of whose hints and conjectures on such subjects have anticipated or been confirmed by more recent inquiry, and who observes that the "romance, which in the MS. has no title, may possibly be an older copy of one which is frequently quoted by Du Cange, under the title of '*Le Roman de Roncevaux.*'" "The author's name," he adds, "is Turolde, as appears from the last line :—

Ci fait le geste que Turolde' declinet.

He is not mentioned by any of the writers of French

literary history that I have seen." There are in fact other manuscripts of the work, but of a later age. It appears, however, to have been generally forgotten until it was again mentioned by the late Rev. J. F. Conybeare, in announcing, in the Gentleman's Magazine for August, 1817, his 'Illustrations of the Early History of English and French Poetry'—a work which, unfortunately, he did not live to publish. That same year an analysis of the poem was given in the first volume of the 'Mémoires et Dissertations de la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France,' by M. de Musset, who at the same time announced an edition of it as in preparation by M. Guyot des Herbiers. This, however, never appeared, any more than an edition which was announced in 1832 as then preparing by M. Bourdillon. Nor, although it was subsequently made the subject of much discussion by M. H. Monin, who published a Dissertation upon it in an 8vo. volume, at Paris, in 1832, by M. Paulin Paris, by M. Le Roux de Lincy, in his 'Analyse du Roman de Garin le Loherain' (12mo. Paris, 1835), and other French poetical antiquaries, was the poem made accessible to the public, till M. Michel was enabled to produce his edition of it (of which the impression, however, was very limited) by the liberality of the French government. But whether the learned editor was justified in the title he has prefixed to it may still be questioned. The 'Chanson de Roland' would seem to be a more appropriate name for some particular portion of such a long composition than for the whole.

ANGLO-NORMAN POETS.—KING HENRY I.—HIS QUEENS,  
MATILDA AND ALICE.

To our King Henry I., surnamed Beauclerk, or the Scholar, who was carefully educated under the superintendence of the learned Lanfranc, afterwards archbishop and saint, M. de la Rue attributes both an English translation of a collection of Latin *Æsopian* fables, mentioned in the next age by Marie de France, and rendered by her into French verse, and a short poem in romance entitled ‘Urbanus,’ or ‘Le Dictié d’Urbain,’ being a sort of code of the rules of politeness as understood and observed in his day. The evidence, however, is not very conclusive as to either production; and the English fables, in particular, now only known from Marie’s translation, have been claimed, with perhaps more probability, for the Saxon king Alfred, whose name appears instead of that of Henry in some manuscripts of Marie’s work.\* Both Henry’s queens, it may be noticed, are recorded to have been, as well as himself, fond of literature and poetry. M. de la Rue refers to the works of Hildebert, Bishop of le Mans, as containing several pieces of Latin poetry addressed to the first of them, Matildis, or Matilda, the daughter of the Scottish king Malcolm Canmore and the Saxon Margaret, herself a learned as well as pious princess. But the liveliest picture of this part of Queen Matilda’s character is that drawn by William of Malmesbury, who, it will be perceived however, is no

\* See a note upon this subject (which, however, appears not to have convinced De la Rue) by the late Mr. Price, in his edition of Warton’s *History of English Poetry*, i. lxxiv., &c.

great admirer of some of the tastes which he describes :—  
“ She had a singular pleasure in hearing the service of God ; and on this account was thoughtlessly prodigal towards clerks of melodious voice ; addressed them kindly, gave to them liberally, and promised still more abundantly. Her generosity becoming universally known, crowds of scholars, equally famed for verse and for singing, came over ; and happy did he account himself who could soothe the ears of the queen by the novelty of his song. Nor on those only did she lavish money, but on all sorts of men, especially foreigners, that, through her presents, they might proclaim her liberality abroad ; for the desire of fame is so rooted in the human mind that scarcely is any one contented with the precious fruits of a good conscience, but is fondly anxious, if he does anything laudable, to have it generally known. Hence, it was generally observed, the disposition crept upon the queen to reward all the foreigners she could, while the others were kept in suspense, sometimes with effectual, but often with empty promises. Hence, too, it arose that she fell into the error of prodigal givers ; bringing many claims on her tenantry, exposing them to injuries, and taking away their property ; by which, obtaining the credit of a liberal benefactress, she little regarded their sarcasms.”\* With all this vanity, however, and love of admiration and applause, if such it is to be called, Matilda is admitted by the historian to have constantly practised the humblest and most self-denying offices of

\* *Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Gesta Regum Anglorum*, lib. v. ad an. 1107. We have availed ourselves of the excellent translation of the Rev. John Sharpe, 4to. London, 1815, p. 516.

religion ; she did not shrink, we are told, either from washing the feet of diseased persons, or even from touching and dressing their sores and pressing their hands for a long time with devout affection to her lips ; and her chief pleasure was in the worship of God. It is a trait of the times to find the same person the chief patroness of piety and of poetry. Henry's second queen, Adelais, or Alice, of Louvain, is addressed by several of the Norman and Anglo-Norman *trouvères* as the special protectress of them and their art.

PHILIP DE THAN.—GEOFFREY, ABBOT OF ST. ALBANS.

One of those by whom she is thus distinguished is Philip de 'Than (anciently Thaon or Thau), who, if the age of Turolde and his *Roman de Roncevaux* be disputed, may be regarded as the earliest of the *trouvères* any of whose works have certainly come down to us. He is the author of two French poems of considerable length ; one a treatise on chronological computation, which he entitles '*Liber de Creaturis* ;' the other, called '*Bestiarius*,' being a sort of natural history, comprising an account of both animal and mineral productions. The latter, however, which is dedicated to Queen Adelais, and was probably written between 1120 and 1130, is merely a translation of a Latin work of the same title.

We have already mentioned Geffroy, or Geoffrey, also a native of Normandy, who died abbot of the monastery of St. Albans in 1146, and his miracle-play of St. Catherine, which is stated by Matthew Paris to have been acted by the boys attending his school at Dunstable about the year 1110, and is generally referred to as the

earliest drama upon record in any modern tongue.\* But in truth we have no information in what language this lost production of Geoffrey was composed; it may have been in French, in English, or in Latin, though it is most probable that it was in the first-mentioned tongue. If so, it is by much the most ancient French play of which the name has been preserved. Its claim to stand at the head of modern dramatic literature, however, has been disputed. "Perhaps," observes a late learned writer, "the plays of Roswitha, a nun of Gandersheim in Lower Saxony, who lived towards the close of the tenth century, afford the earliest specimens of dramatic composition since the decline of the Roman empire."† These plays of Roswitha's appear to have been intended only for reading, and are not known ever to have been acted; but they have been twice published;—first by Conrad Celtes in 1501, and again by Leonard Schurtz-fleisch in 1707.

PILGRIMAGE OF SAINT BRANDAN.—CHARLEMAGNE.

Another of the poetical protégés or celebrators of Queen Adelais is the unknown author of a poem of between 800 and 900 verses on the Pilgrimage of St. Brandan. There were, it appears, in the sixth century two Irish ecclesiastics of the name of Brandan or Brendan, both of whom have since been canonized, the day assigned in the Calendar to the one being the 29th of November, to the other the 16th of May. It is the latter with whom we have here to do. He has the credit of having been the founder of the abbey of Clonfert in

\* See ante, p. 46.

† Note by Price to Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poet.*, ii. 68.

Galway; but the most memorable passage of his history is his voyage, along with some of his monks, in quest of a more profound seclusion from the world, which was believed in an after age to have conducted him to one of the Fortunate Islands, or one of the Canaries according to a still later interpretation. He did not find the scheme of so distant a retirement to answer, and he soon returned to Ireland; but M. de la Rue thinks it probable that he drew up a narrative of his adventures for the information of the European public of that day, out of which there grew in course of time the legend which bears the name of his Voyage to the Terrestrial Paradise, and which is as full of marvels and miracles as that of Ulysses, or any of those of Sinbad the Sailor. Indeed one of Sinbad's principal wonders, his landing on the whale, is actually found in the Voyage of St. Brandan. De la Rue has given copious extracts from the poem on this subject which he notices, and which professes to have been composed at the command of Queen Adelais, and immediately after her marriage in 1121. But the fullest account of St. Brandan and his Pilgrimage will be found in the Preface to a more recent publication by M. Achille Jubinal, entitled '*La Légende Latine de S. Brandaines, avec une traduction inédite en prose et en poésie Romane, publiée d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi, remontant aux xi<sup>e</sup>, xii<sup>e</sup>, et xiii<sup>e</sup> siècles;*' 8vo., Paris, 1836. Of the French metrical legend here printed, which is different from the Anglo-Norman romance analysed by De la Rue, M. Jubinal states that there are many manuscripts; it is found as part of a poem of the thirteenth century written by Gauthier de Metz, entitled '*Image du Monde.*' Several



copies of the story in Latin prose also exist; of the French prose version there is only one known text, which is in the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris. It is found, however, both in verse and prose in most of the other European tongues—in Irish, in Welsh, in Spanish, in German of various dialects, in Flemish, in English; and there are printed editions of it, both recent and in the earlier ages of typography, in several of these languages. M. Jubinal mentions an edition of it in English prose, printed by Wynken de Worde, in folio, in 1516: it appears to be a translation from a Latin version contained in a volume of Lives of the Saints, compiled under the title of *Legenda Aurea*, by John Capgrave, who was an English monk of the fourteenth century, and the author also of a quantity of verse, some of which still exists, in his native tongue.\* It is remarkable that St. Brandan, or Brandain, has given his name to an imaginary island long popularly believed to form one of the Canary group, although become invisible since his day, or at least not to be discovered by modern navigators, to whom it was a frequent object of search from the beginning of the sixteenth down to so late a date as the beginning of the eighteenth century: the last expedition in quest of it was fitted out from Spain in 1721. The Spaniards, who call the lost island San Borendon, believe it to be the retreat of their King Rodrigo; the Portuguese assign it to their Don Sebastian.† The acquaint-

\* See Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poet.*, ii. 355; and additional note by Parke, p. 514 (edit. of 1824).

† Both the Abbé de la Rue and M. Jubinal refer the reader for information upon the subject of the Isle of St. Brandan to the '*Noticias de la Historia de las islas de*

ance of the modern nations of Europe with the Canary Islands dates only from about the year 1330, when a French ship was driven upon one of them in a storm.

Along with this romance on the pilgrimage of St. Brandon may be noticed another old French poem on a fabulous journey of Charlemagne to Constantinople and Jerusalem, which is perhaps of still earlier date, and which has also from the language been supposed to have been written in England. An account of it is given by De la Rue (*Essais*, ii. 23-32); and the poem has been since published by M. Francisque Michel, from the Royal MS. 16 E. viii., at the British Museum, under the title of 'Charlemagne, an Anglo-Norman poem of the Twelfth Century, with an Introduction and a Glossarial Index;' 12mo. Lon. 1836. It consists of only 870 lines.

ANGLO-NORMAN CHRONICLERS.—GAIMAR.—DAVID.

But the farther we pursue the history of this early Norman poetry, the closer becomes its connexion with our own country. Not only does it seek its chief audience in England, but the subjects with which it occupies itself come to be principally or almost exclusively English. The earliest of the old French versifiers of our English history appears to be Geffroy Gaimar, who must have written his chronicle before 1146. As commonly known, it consists of a history of the Anglo-Saxon kings only; but at the end the writer expressly states that he had also composed a '*Brut d'Angleterre*,' or History of the Britons, the materials for which he had found in various Latin, Romance, and English manuscripts, and especially *Canaria*,' of Dom Joseph da Viera y Clavigo (Madrid, 1672 or 1771).

in a history of the British kings which Robert Earl of Gloucester had procured to be translated from the books of the Welsh, and of which he (Gaimar) had obtained the use, through the Lady Constance, the wife of Raoul Fitz-Gilbert; she sent to Helmeslac, or Hamlac (now Helmesley-Blackmoor, in the Vale of Ryedale), in Yorkshire, to ask the book from the Baron Walter Espec, who thereupon borrowed it for her from the earl. This account the Abbé de la Rue considers to be highly curious and valuable as establishing the fact that the Welsh were in possession of a British history of their own different from the Armorican one brought over by Walter Archdeacon of Oxford, the translation of which Gaimar also mentions, telling us, as the Abbé understands his expressions, that he had compared the two versions, and corrected the one by the other. Afterwards the Abbé states that he had been informed by Mr. Petrie, the late keeper of the records in the Tower, that a copy of the earlier portion of Gaimar's chronicle had at last been found. "This discovery," he adds, "would be so much the more precious, that, by comparing the history of the British kings by Gaimar with that of Geoffrey of Monmouth in Latin, or the translation of it into romance verse [presently to be noticed] by Robert Wace, we might learn whether the sources whence the Armoricans and the Welsh have drawn are the same, whether the legends of each country are indigenous and different from those of the other, what corrections Gaimar, in compiling his Brut, had been able to make upon the work on the same subject by Geoffrey of Monmouth, which he says he had amended, and finally what relations may have originally

existed between the two countries, and whether any still subsisted in the twelfth century.”\*

\* We have not been able to learn that any such discovery as that spoken of in the text has actually been made. It appears, indeed, that the *Brut* contained in Royal MS. 13 A. xxi., at the British Museum, varies greatly from other copies of the work attributed to Wace; M. Le Roux de Lincy, in his late edition of Wace's *Brut* (Rouen, 1836, 1838) states ('Description des Manuscrits,' p. lxxi.), on the information of Sir Frederick Madden and Mr. Thomas Wright, that after the first fifty-two verses the text in the Royal MS. is quite different from the text he has printed down to the birth of Arthur, or for about 7800 verses, being about half the poem; and we observe that, in the copy of Casley's 'Catalogue of the MSS. in the King's Library,' 4to. Lond. 1734, which belongs to the Reading-room at the British Museum, the description (at p. 218) of the *Brut* in 13 A. xxi. — "Le Brut, ke Maistre Wace translata de Latin en Franceis, &c." — has recently had the word *Brut* underscored, and the word *Gaimar* written on the margin. But, if this be intended to intimate that the '*Brut*' to which the entry refers is by Gaimar, we are not aware of the grounds for such a conclusion; the chronicle is expressly declared to be by "Meistre Wace," not only in the title, but both in its introductory and again in its concluding lines. All the correction that Casley's entry seems to want is an addition to it, stating that the second portion of the romance, beginning on fol. 111 r<sup>o</sup>., and entitled '*Lestorie des Engles*,' is by Gaimar. The '*Brut*' of this Royal MS., we should suspect, will be found to have a better claim to be accounted the genuine work of Wace than that printed by M. Le Roux de Lincy, who has evidently adopted his text in the first instance upon considerations of convenience, and then set about defending it upon those of criticism. But this gentleman, moreover, in his loose, precipitate, and blundering disquisition, entitled '*Analyse Critique et Littéraire*,' appended to his second volume, contends that the Abbé de la Rue is altogether mistaken in his interpretation of what Gaimar says about the book of Walter Archdeacon of Oxford, and maintains that this Latin translation of the

Of David, a contemporary of Gaimar, who is noticed by the latter as having written a history of Henry I. in French verse, which was highly esteemed, and was especially a favourite book with the queen Adelais, although Gaimar holds that it did not go sufficiently into details to do justice to the nobleness, the liberality, the magnificence, and the other brilliant qualities of that great king, nothing remains but the name. His poem was probably only a short composition; Gaimar calls it a *chanson*, or song, and speaks of it as having been set to music.

## WACE.

The most famous of these writers of early English history in romance verse is Master Wace—*Maitre Wace*, *clerc lisant* (that is, writing clerk), as he calls himself—in Latin *Magister Wacius*. The name is also otherwise written in his own day *Waice*, *Gace*, *Gasse*, and *Gasce*; but *Guace*, *Huace*, *Huistace*, *Wistace*, *Extasse*, *Eustace*, *Eustache*, are the corruptions of a subsequent age or modern variations, and *Wate*, which is the form adopted by some modern writers, is a mere mistranscription. Bishop Huet (in his ‘*Origines de Caen*,’ Rouen, 1702) has called him Robert Wace; but his Christian name appears rather to have been Richard. He was a native of the island of Jersey, where he was probably born in the last decade of the eleventh century, and of a good family; his father was one of the Norman barons who accompanied the Conqueror to England and fought at Hastings; he himself was educated for the ecclesiastical

Armorican history by Walter was, in fact, the very volume which Gaimar obtained the loan of from the Earl of Gloucester, for whom Walter had made the translation.

profession at Caen, and, after passing some years in other parts of France, and also, it appears, visiting England, he returned and settled in that city, where he spent the rest of his life in writing his various romance poems. In his latter years he was, on the recommendation of Henry II., made a canon of Bayeux, and one work that has been usually attributed to him must have been written at so late a date as 1174, when he would be a very old man. The Waces, probably descendants of the poet's father, obtained large possessions in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire; and another branch continued to flourish for some ages in Normandy. The first of Wace's chronicles is entitled the '*Brut d'Angleterre*,'\* and is in the main a translation into romance verse of eight syllables of the British History of Geoffrey of Monmouth, although it contains also a good many things which are not in Geoffrey. After finishing his work Wace presented it to Henry II.'s queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Many manuscripts of it exist both in England and in France;

\* The British Chronicles are generally supposed to have been called *Bruts* from Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, who is represented in them as the first king of the Britons; but the author of '*Britannia after the Romans*' has lately announced a new interpretation of the term. "*Brud*," he says (p. xxii.), "in construction Brut, is reputation, or rumour, and in the secondary sense, a chronicle, or history. It retains that original sense in the French and English word *bruit*; and, though it is curious that all the Welsh Chronicles begin with the reign of Brutus, we must not be seduced by that accident into etymological trifling." We may note by the by, that this writer, in the next sentence, goes on to repeat the common mistake that Walter, otherwise called Calenius, from whom Geoffrey of Monmouth received his Armorican manuscript, was the same person with Walter Mapes.

and it has recently been printed, but, we apprehend, not from the oldest or most genuine text, under the title of 'Le Roman de Brut, par Wace; avec un Commentaire et des Notes par Le Roux de Lincy;' 2 vols. 8vo. Rouen, 1836, 1838. Wace's other great work is that commonly called the 'Roman de Rou,' that is, the Romance of Rollo. It is a chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy, in two parts; the first, in Alexandrine verses, extending only to the beginning of the reign of the third duke, Richard Sans-peur; the second, in eight-syllable rhymes, coming down to the year 1170, the sixteenth of Henry II. The composition of the first part is stated to have been commenced in 1160, and it appears to have been published by itself; but some years after, on learning that the charge of writing the history of the Dukes of Normandy in verse had been confided by King Henry to another poet named Benoît, Wace, as M. de la Rue supposes, resumed his pen, and, adopting for expedition the easier octosyllabic verse, hastened to complete his task before his rival.\* The entire work was printed for the first time in 1827 at Rouen, in 2 vols. 8vo., under the title of 'Le Roman de Rou et des Ducs de Normandie, par Robert Wace; avec des Notes par Frédéric Pluquet;' but, although M. Pluquet, who had in 1824 published a short notice about Wace (*Notice sur la Vie et les Ecrits de Robert Wace*), mostly copied from the Abbé de la Rue's paper in the *Archæologia*, was assisted in the preparation of his edition by M. Auguste le Prevost, whose

\* M. Le Roux de Lincy, however, denies that this latter part of the 'Roman des Ducs de Normandie' is by Wace, or that he ever really attempted in his old age to compete with Benoît.

notes are often learned and curious, it is evident that very little knowledge or critical judgment has been employed in settling the text, which is often manifestly corrupt either from mistranscription or reliance on a faulty original. Some of its errors have been pointed out, with sufficient gentleness, by M. Raynouard in a small tract entitled '*Observations Philosophiques et Grammaticales sur le Roman de Rou,*' 8vo. Rouen, 1829; which ought always to accompany M. Pluquet's edition. Mr. Edgar Taylor (author of the volume entitled '*Lays of the Minnesingers or German Troubadours,*' and other works) has translated so much of the *Roman de Rou* as relates to the Conquest of England into English prose, with notes and illustrations, 8vo. Lond. 1837. The interest that has been lately excited by this old Norman poet is further evinced by the publication of two others of his supposed works; his *Shorter Chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy*, in Alexandrine verse, from Henry II. back to Rollo, which is printed in the first volume (Par. ii. pp. 444-447) of the '*Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie,*' 8vo. 1824;\* and his poem, in verse of eight syllables, on the establishment by William the Conqueror of the Festival of the Conception of the Virgin, which was printed in 8vo. at Rouen, in 1842, under the title of '*L'Etablissement de la Fête de la Conception Notre Dame, dite la Fête aux Normands*;' publié pour la première fois d'après les MSS. de la Bibliothèque du Roi,

\* Both M. Le Roux de Lincy, however, and M. Francisque Michel, a much higher authority (in the Preface to his '*Chronique des Ducs de Normandie par Benoît,*' 1836, p. xv.), agree in holding this to be the production of a later writer than Wace.



par MM. Mancel et Trebutien.' A very limited impression, also, of another of his romances, entitled 'La Vie de St. Nicholas,' in about 1500 lines, of which there are several manuscripts in existence, and some extracts from which are given by Hickes in his '*Thesaurus Linguarum Septentrionalium*,' is stated by M. Le Roux de Liney to have been produced by M. Monmerqué for the *Société des Bibliophiles Français*, and to be contained in the seventh volume of their privately printed '*Mélanges*,' 8vo. Paris, 1820-1834. Wace is besides commonly held to be the author of a romance about the Virgin, extending to 1800 verses, and comprising a full account of her life and death, which is still in manuscript.

## BENOIT.

Wace's contemporary and rival, Benoît, also completed his Chronicle of the Norman Dukes, though not till some years after Wace had finished his. Benoît's performance consists, according to De la Rue, of nearly 46,000 octosyllabic verses, and begins at the first irruption of the Normans under their leaders Hastings and Bier Ironside, but comes down no farther than to the end of the reign of Henry I. It is preserved only in one MS., which is in the Harleian collection, in the British Museum; but it has been lately printed at Paris, under the care of M. Francisque Michel, with the title of '*Chronique des Ducs de Normandie, par Benoît, Trouvère Anglo-Normand du 12<sup>me</sup> siècle*,' 2 vols. 4to. 1836-8.\* It is, from its fulness and minuteness, one of the most curious monuments we possess

\* As here given, however, the work consists of only 31,776 verses. The promised completion of M. Michel's publication has not yet appeared.

of early Norman history, and contains many details nowhere else to be found. This Benoît has also been commonly supposed to be the same with the Benoît de St. More, or St. Maure, by whom we have another long romance of nearly 30,000 verses, entitled the '*Roman de Troye*,' being a legendary history of the Trojan war, founded on the favourite authorities of the middle ages, the fictitious Dares Phrygius and Dictys of Crete; but their identity is disputed or doubted by M. Michel, and he also dissents from De la Rue's notion that Benoît is the author of a song or canticle on the subject of the Crusades, which is found at the end of the manuscript of his Chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy, and which, on this supposition, is the most ancient piece of Anglo-Norman lyrical poetry that has come down to us. It consists of six stanzas, each of seven decasyllabic verses, and is printed entire by De la Rue. On the other hand, M. Michel is inclined to attribute to Benoît a Life of Becket, which appears to have been written in this age; but the impression of this poem, which was to accompany the Chronicle, has never appeared.

#### EVARD.—FRENCH LANGUAGE IN SCOTLAND.

It will probably surprise the reader to encounter a Scotchman among these early romance poets, one Evrard, who, after having been a monk of Kirkham in Yorkshire, was in 1150 appointed by David I. of Scotland—that "sore saint to the crown," as he was called by his successor, the first James—the first abbot of his newly-founded abbey of Ulme or Holme-Cultraine in Cumberland. He is the author of a French metrical translation of what are called the Distichs of Cato, which affords the first known

example in the language of mixed rhymes, that is, of the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, now an established rule of French poetry. A romance history of the Passion of Christ, in 126 strophes, and in the same style with the Distichs, which is found along with the Latin work in a manuscript belonging to the Royal Society, is also in all probability by Evrard. The French language appears to have been almost as generally used in Scotland at this time as in England. Pinkerton, in his 'Essay on the Origin of Scottish Poetry,' prefixed to his 'Ancient Scottish Poems,' 2 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1786, after observing that the chief English poets wrote solely in French for three centuries after the Conquest—that French was the only language used at court or by the nobility, nay even by the middle ranks of people—that Saxon was left merely to the mob—that the apophthegms, expressions, &c., preserved by historians of the time, are all in old French—and that probably upwards of a hundred names of English writers who wrote in French during that interval might yet be recovered—proceeds to mention some facts which illustrate the prevalence of the same language in the northern kingdom. "Upon the murder of Duncan by Macbeth," he remarks, "in 1039, Malcolm, the heir of the crown, fled into England, where he remained for seventeen years before he was enabled to resume his kingdom. Edward the Confessor was king of England from 1041 till 1065, and in his reign we know that French was the court language in England. Malcolm surely used this speech, and his court also. Many Saxons came to Scotland with him in 1056, and also at the Conquest (1066); but in 1093 they were all very prudently ordered to leave the kingdom by Dovenald Ban, his suc-

cessor. They were chiefly men of rank ; and, had they introduced any language, it would have been the French. . . . But yet another point requires our attention. In 945, Edmund King of England gave Cumberland to Malcolm I., King of Scotland, on condition of homage for it. From this period the heir of the Scottish crown was always Prince of Cumberland, and resided as a king in that country. . . . Now the Prince, it may be supposed, did not use the Gaelic in a country where it was never spoken ; but, remaining there from early youth, adopted French, the court tongue of England, in which country his principality was, and to the king of which he was bound to do homage.”\* He then mentions that under William of Scotland, in 1165, the coin of that country bears a French inscription ; and that Alexander III., in 1249, is stated to have taken the coronation oath *Latine et Gallice*, in Latin and in French : it was read in Latin (probably after the ancient formula), and then expounded in French.† And he concludes :—“ French being the language of the polite, and Latin of the learned, who could use the vulgar tongue in writing ? . . . I suspect that no Scottish poet, before Thomas of Erskildon, ventured beyond a ballad when using his native tongue. Perhaps one or two may have written a romance in French rhyme, though now lost or unknown. . . . The poor bards who entertained the mob might recite ballads and short romances in the vulgar tongue ; but the minstrels who appeared in the king’s or in the baron’s hall would use French only, as in England ; for had they tried the common language they would have been sent

\* Essay, p. lxiv.

† Hailes, *Annals*, i. 195.

into the kitchen." \* By the common language, Pinkerton means the Pictish, which he conceives to have been a Gothic dialect nearly allied to the Saxon. In this notion he is probably wrong: there is every reason to believe that the Piets spoke a Celtic dialect; but it is true, nevertheless, that the popular speech of the south-eastern half of Scotland at this period was, as he assumes, a Gothic or Saxon dialect, though derived not from the Piets, but from the Saxon and Danish settlers, who had occupied the whole of that region partially, and a great part of it exclusively, ever since the seventh century.

LUC DE LA BARRE.—GUICHARD DE BEAULIEU.

Another early trouvère whose history connects him with England is Luc de la Barre, famous for the satirical rhymes which he composed against Henry I., and for the terrible punishment (the extinction of his sight) which he drew down upon himself from the exasperated king. It appears, however, that it was not till after repeated and extreme provocation, and the abuse of much clemency, that Henry took this savage revenge. De la Barre, who was a distinguished Norman baron and warrior as well as a poet, had espoused the cause of Duke Robert in the quarrel between the two brothers; but, although, in the course of the contest of arms for the possession of the duchy, he had been several times taken prisoner, he had always been dismissed without ransom by the English king, perhaps out of respect to his poetical talents or reputation, till he at last, in a fatal hour for himself, turned against his benefactor with his pen as well

\* Essay, p. lxvi.

as with his sword. Henry was perhaps stung more by the ingratitude of the poet than by the sharpness of his sarcasms; or, at any rate, as De la Rue insinuates, if it was an acute feeling of the wit and the poetry which actuated him, there was still something generous and high-minded even in an excess of such sensibility.

Guichard de Beaulieu describes himself as a monk of the priory of that name, which was a dependency of the abbey of St. Albans. His principal work is a sort of sermon, in French verse, on the vices of the age, consisting of nearly 2000 Alexandrine lines. It appears to have been intended for a popular audience. The poetical preacher begins by telling his hearers that he is not going to speak to them in Latin, but in Romance, in order that all may understand him. "The mention of sermons in verse," observes De la Rue, "may perhaps surprise the reader; but it is certain that at this epoch, at least among the Normans and the Anglo-Normans, it was customary to read to the people the lives of the Saints in French verse, on Sundays and holidays."\* Guichard's poetry is described as often naive and graceful in expression, and sweet in its flow; and he is the first writer who is known to have introduced into the romance poetry the practice of preserving the same rhyme throughout each stanza or paragraph, extending sometimes to thirty, sixty, or even eighty lines or more †—a fashion followed

\* *Essais*, ii. 133.

† The commencing stanza of '*Parise la Duchesse*' (considered as one of the parts of the '*Roman des Douze Paires de France*'), which has lately been published under the care of M. G. F. de Martonne, 12mo. Paris, 1836, consists of 119 lines, all ending with the same rhyme.

by many succeeding writers in ten and twelve syllabled verse, and which De la Rue conceives Guichard must have borrowed from the Welsh, or their kindred the Armoricans.

#### ARTHURIAN ROMANCE.—THE SAINT GREAL.

We cannot here attempt to take up the intricate and obscure question of the origin of the Arthurian body of Romance, including the romances of the Round Table and those of the quest of the St. Greal, about which so much has been written, in great part to little purpose except to be refuted by the next inquirer. In addition to the earlier speculations of Warburton, Tyrwhitt, Warton, Percy, and Ritson, and to what has been more recently advanced by Ellis, Southey, Scott, Dunlop, and other writers among ourselves, the Preface of the late Mr. Price to his edition of Warton's *History of English Poetry* (pp. 68, &c.), and the Introduction to '*Britannia after the Romans*' (pp. vi. &c.), may be pointed out to the reader's attention. The theory of the author of the last-mentioned treatise is in some respects new and curious. "The great work," he observes, "and, as I may say, the Alcoran, of Arthurian romance was the Book of the Saint Greal. In truth, it is no romance, but a blasphemous imposture, more extravagant and daring than any other on record, in which it is endeavoured to pass off the mysteries of bardism for direct inspirations of the Holy Ghost." The original work, this writer holds, was actually composed in Welsh, as it professes to have been, in the year 717. "Greal," he says, "is a Welsh word, signifying an aggregate of principles, a magazine; and the elementary world, or world of spi-

rits, was called the *Country of the Greal*. From thence the word Greal, and in Latin Gradalis, came to signify a vessel in which various messes might be mixed up." The Saint Greal, according to the common account in the British romances, which appears to be derived from the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, is the plate from which Christ ate his last supper, and which is said to have been appropriated by Joseph of Arimathea, and to have been afterwards used by him to collect the blood that flowed from the wounds of the Redeemer. It makes a great figure in the romantic history of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, as may be seen in the eleventh and subsequent books of the popular compilation entitled '*Le Morte Darthur*.' The author of '*Britannia after the Romans*' maintains that the original Welsh Book of the Saint Greal was unquestionably the work of the bard Tysilio. De la Rue affirms that the original romances on the quest of the Saint Greal, or Saint Graal, are to be considered as forming quite a distinct body of fiction from those relating to the Round Table, and that much misapprehension has arisen from confounding the two. The account given by him is in substance as follows:—The oldest verse romance on the subject of the Saint Greal appears to have been composed by Chrétien de Troyes, about the year 1170; but of his work only some fragments remain, and the earliest entire romance now existing which treats of this subject is the prose '*Roman de Tristan*,' written by Luc du Gast, who was a person of family and property; he calls himself "*Chevalier*" and "*Sire du Chastel du Gast*"—that is, according to M. de la Rue, Gast in Normandy, now situated in the canton of St. Sever, and the department of Calvados. Although



of Norman descent, however, he was a native and inhabitant of England: he resided, he tell us, near Salisbury; and, if his French should not always be correct, he begs his readers to excuse him on the score of his English birth and breeding. It was from this prose romance, the Abbé proceeds to state, and from a continuation of it by Walter Map, or Mapes, already mentioned, whose work is entitled '*Roman des Diverses Quêtes du Saint Graal*,' and is dedicated to Henry II., that Chrétien de Troyes soon after drew the materials of his verse romance, which is called the *Roman du Saint Graal*, or sometimes the '*Roman de Perceval*.' But both Luc du Gast and Walter Map, and also Robert de Borron, who likewise wrote in this age a prose *Roman du Saint Graal* (which, however, is merely a life of Joseph of Arimathea), all declare that they translated from a Latin original, which they say had been drawn up by order of King Arthur himself, and deposited by him in the library of the cathedral of Salisbury. Another romance on the subject of the Saint Greal, which is now lost, is attributed to a writer named Gace le Blount, who is said to have been a relation of Henry II. Map, in addition to his '*Roman des Diverses Quêtes*,' which is in two parts, continued the history of the knights who had engaged in the search for the Saint Greal in a third romance, also in prose, which he entitled '*La Mort d'Artur*;' and he is also the author of another prose romance on the adventures of '*Lancelot du Lac*.' Upon one of the incidents in this last Chrétien de Troyes founded his verse romance, also still extant, entitled '*Lancelot de la Charette*.' From another prose romance by Robert de Borron, on the subject of the enchanter

Merlin, an Anglo-Norman trouvère of the latter part of the thirteenth century composed a verse romance, which is still preserved, entitled 'Merlyn Ambroise.' Finally, in association with his relation Elie de Borron, and with another writer called Rusticien de Pise, Robert de Borron produced a prose translation of the 'Historia Britonum' of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and also the two romances of 'Meliadus de Leonois' and 'Giron le Courtois'; and Elie de Borron wrote by himself the 'Roman de Palamedes.'\*

Thus far the Abbé de la Rue. Since his work appeared, however, some parts of his statement have been corrected or controverted by M. Michel and other recent writers. In the elaborate Introduction to his edition of *Tristan*, to be presently mentioned (Paris, 1835), M. Michel, following the older authorities, describes Luc, or Luces, to whom he attributes either the invention, or at least the first translation from the Latin, of that romance, as lord of the château of Gat, Gast, Gant, or Gail, in the neighbourhood of Salisbury, in England; apparently ignorant that no such place is discoverable in that part of the world, and that M. de la Rue had expressly pointed out where the estate of Gast is still to be found in Normandy. Henry II., M. Michel proceeds to inform us, delighted with this prose work of Luces, engaged Walter Map to follow it up in the same style with the Romance of Lancelot; and Robert de Buron, Borron, or Bowron, to add that of the Saint Greal: finally, Helye de Buron, a brother, or at least a relation, of Robert, revised the whole, and gave a unity and completeness to the cycle by finishing the story of

\* De la Rue, *Essais Historiques*, ii. 206—248.

Tristram. Thus, observes M. Michel, Tristram was the first begun and the last finished of the four—of the three, we should rather say, according to this account. Subsequently, in the ‘Notice’ prefixed to his publication, from the MS. in the Bibliothèque du Roi, of the ‘Roman du Saint Graal,’ in old French verse (12mo. Bordeaux, 1841), M. Michel states that what Map did by order of Henry II. was to draw up the Romance of the Saint Graal in Latin from the songs and lays of the bards of Britany; and that his work was afterwards translated into French by Robert de Borron. The ‘Roman de Perceval’ of Chrestien de Troyes is not, he says, a romance of the Saint Graal at all; it only contains the last adventures of the Saint Graal. The poem which he publishes, and which is incomplete, extends to 4018 octosyllabic lines.

## ROMAN DU ROI HORN.

It will be most convenient to notice here the French metrical Romance of King Horn (Roman du Roi Horn), of which there remain two fragments (one of 2386, the other of 2494 lines). This is the work of a poet who calls himself “Mestre Thomas,” and is regarded by Ritson and M. de la Rue as a composition of the latter part of the twelfth century, and as the original of the English ‘Horne Childe,’ or ‘Geste of Kyng Horn;’ although, by other eminent authorities, such as Bishop Percy and the late learned editor of Warton, the English poem has been held to be the earlier of the two. The Harleian MS. of the first of the two fragments, which Ritson held to be of the twelfth century, is now allowed to be of the latter part of the thirteenth. A few extracts from this French romance have been given by Ritson in the notes to his edition of the English ‘Geste’

(‘Ancient English Metrical Romances,’ iii. 264-281), and others are printed by M. de la Rue.\* It does not very distinctly appear upon what evidence the latter determines the age of the work, unless it be upon the form of the language; and it must be confessed that the manner seems to be more ornate and ambitious than that which is characteristic of the French romance poetry of the twelfth century. Bishop Percy ascribed the English ‘Kyng Horn’ to so early a date as “within a century after the Conquest;” but that poem is now, we believe, admitted on all hands to be not more ancient than the reign of Edward I. or Henry III.

#### TRISTAN, OR TRISTREM.

To this or to another Thomas the French metrical ‘Roman de Tristan’ is also attributed. All that remains of this romance is a fragment of 1811 verses.† There can hardly be a doubt that it is an earlier composition than the English ‘Sir Tristrem,’ published by Sir Walter Scott, from the Auchinleck MS., and attributed by him to Thomas of Ercildown, styled the Rhymer, who is admitted to have belonged to the latter part of the thirteenth century; but whether the author of the French romance be the Thomas of Britany referred to as his chief authority by

\* De la Rue, *Essais Historiques*, ii. 251—260.

† There is another fragment, of 996 verses, of a romance of Tristan, which has been assumed to belong to the same work; but it appears now to be agreed that the two fragments are parts of two different poems written by different authors. Abstracts, in English, by the late Mr. George Ellis are given of both in the Appendix to Sir Walter Scott’s edition of the English Romance of ‘Sir Tristrem.’ Both were among the MSS. of the late Mr. Douce, and are now in the Bodleian Library.

Gotfried von Strasburgh, a German minstrel of the thirteenth century, by whom there remains a long metrical romance, in his own language, on the subject of Sir Tristrem—whether he be the same Thomas to whom we owe the *Roman du Roi Horn* (which Scott was also willing to claim as a translation from another English romance of his Thomas of Ercildown), and what may be the real connexion between either the French or the German ‘Tristrem’ and the English—as well as whether the latter work be the Sir Tristrem of Thomas of Ercildown mentioned by Robert de Brunne (in the early part of the fourteenth century)—or to what age, country, and author it is to be assigned—are questions upon which we cannot here enter. They will be found profusely discussed in Scott’s *Introduction and Notes* to his edition of *Sir Tristrem* (8vo. Edinb. 1803); in a long Note, in reply to his views, by Mr. Price, inserted at the end of the first volume of his edition of *Warton’s History* (pp. 181-198); in an Advertisement by Mr. Lockhart, prefixed to his republication of Scott’s volume (12mo., Edinb. 1833); in M. de la Rue’s *Essais Historiques* (ii. 251-269); in a valuable paper, known to be by Sir Frederick Madden, in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for October, 1833 (vol. civ., pp. 307-312); and in M. Michel’s elaborate *Introduction* to his publication of ‘*The Poetical Romances of Tristan in French, in Anglo-Norman, and in Greek*’ (2 vols. 12mo. London and Paris, 1835).

GUERNES (OR GERVAIS) DE PONT SAINTE MAXENCE.

M. de la Rue mentions, in one of his papers in the *Archæologia*, a *Life of Becket* in French verse by a con-

temporary of the name of Guernes, an ecclesiastic of Pont Sainte Maxence, in Picardy, which is curious from the statement of the author that he had several times read his composition publicly at the tomb of the archbishop. This, the Abbé observes, would seem to show that, in the time of Henry II., the Romance or old French was understood in England even by many of the common people.\* Guernes appears to have begun his poem in France; but he came over to England in 1172, and finished it here in 1177. It consists of above 6000 lines, in stanzas in each of which all the verses terminate in the same rhyme. The only manuscript of it known to De la Rue was one in the Harleian collection (No. 270); but another has since been discovered in the ducal library at Wolfenbüttel, from which the poem has been published by Immanuel Bekker, under the title of ‘*Leben des h. Thomas von Canterbury, Altfranzösisch*’ (8vo. Berlin, 1838). The Wolfenbüttel manuscript, however, wants the beginning, and contains only about 5220 lines.†

#### HERMAN.

William Herman, who was no doubt of English birth, is the author of several religious-romance poems:—a *Life of Tobias*, in about 1400 verses, written at the request of William Prior of Keulworth, in Warwickshire (Keuilleworth en Ardenne); another of 1152 verses on the

\* *Archæologia*, xii. 324.

† An account of Guernes, nearly the same as in the *Archæologia*, is given by De la Rue in his ‘*Essais*’ (vol. ii. pp. 309—313), under the name of ‘*Gervais de Pont Ste. Maxence*.’ In the Harleian MS. the poem is entitled, in Latin, ‘*Vita Thome Cantuar. per Guernes de Ponte Sti. Maxentii*.’ This title is in a more recent hand than the poem; and under “Guernes” is written “Garnerius.” But he is called “Gervais,” or “Gerveis,” by the transcriber of another work.

birth of the Redeemer, entitled 'Les Joies de Notre Dame;' a third, of 844 verses, on a curious theme,—Smoke, Rain, and Woman considered as the three disturbers of a man's domestic comforts,—which was given him, it seems, by Alexander Bishop of Lincoln; a fourth, in 712 verses, on the Miracles of Magdalen of Marseilles; a fifth, on the life, death, and burial of the Virgin Mary; a sixth, a sort of mystery, or scriptural drama, on the divine scheme of redemption, also written at the request of the Prior of Kenilworth; and a seventh, a History of the ten ancient Sibyls, extending to 2496 verses, which professes to be a translation from the Latin, and which he composed at the desire of the Empress Matilda. The era of this poet (whose supposed names, by the by, are only collected from two copies of his poem on the history of the Virgin, in one of which he calls himself *Guillame*, in the other *Hermans*) is ascertained from that of his patron, Alexander Bishop of Lincoln, who died in 1147, and that of Matilda, who died in 1167, while he was employed on his last-mentioned work. In both editions of his poem on the Virgin he calls himself a priest.

HUGH OF RUTLAND.—BOSON.—SIMON DU FRESNE.

Other English *trouveurs* of the same age were Hughes de Rotelande, or Hugh of Rutland, who lived, it seems, according to his own account, at Credenhill in Cornwall,\* and who is the author of two romances, each containing between 10,000 and 11,000 verses, the 'Roman d'Ypomedon' and its continuation the 'Roman de Protesilaus,' which are remarkable as having their scene in

\* There is a place of this name in Hereford.

Magna Græcia, or the south of Italy, and as not drawing their subject from the Welsh or Armorican legends of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, which were now become the common source of the chivalrous romance; \* a religious poet of the name of Boson, from whom we have a volume of lives of nine of the Saints, and who is not improbably the same person with a learned theologian of that name who was nephew and secretary to Pope Adrian IV.; † and Simon du Fresne, canon of the Cathedral of Hereford (sometimes called by later authorities Simon Ash), the friend and correspondent of Gyraldus Cambrensis, and well known among the Latin versifiers of his time, who has left us a French poem of considerable merit entitled in one manuscript 'Dictié du Clerc et de la Philosophie,' in another 'Romance Dame Fortunée,' founded on the favourite classic work of the middle ages, 'Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ.' ‡

#### CARDINAL LANGTON.

De la Rue has introduced among his Anglo-Norman poets of the twelfth or the early part of the thirteenth century the great Stephen Langton, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1207 to 1228, and also a cardinal. The only undoubted specimen of Cardinal Langton's French poetry occurs, strangely enough, in the course of one of his Latin Sermons (preserved in one of the Arundel MSS., now in the British Museum), where, deserting his prose and the more learned language, he suddenly breaks out into song in the idiom of the trou-

\* See an account of these two poems in De la Rue, *Essais*, ii. 285-296.

† *Id.* pp. 297-300.

‡ *Id.* pp. 329-334.



veurs, and, after having pronounced eight graceful and lively lines relating how "belle Alice" rose betimes, and having bedecked herself, went out into a garden and there gathered five flowers which she wove into a chaplet, proceeds throughout the remainder of the discourse to make a mystical application of the several points of this little anecdote to the Holy Virgin—exclaiming at the close of each enthusiastic paragraph,

Ceste est la bele Aliz,  
Ceste est la flur, ceste est le lis.  
(She is the fair Alice,  
She is the flower, she is the lily.)

"It will be admitted," remarks the Abbé de la Rue, "that the taste for French poetry must have been very general in England when we find the chief prelate of the kingdom taking this way of conciliating the attention of his audience." The Abbé thinks it highly probable that Cardinal Langton is also the author of two poetical pieces which occur in the same manuscript with his sermon; the first a little theological drama on the subject of the fall and restoration of man, the other a canticle or song of 126 strophes on the Passion of Christ. Both are stated to be of considerable merit.

## KING RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION.

Finally, we have to enrol in this list of the early English writers of French poetry the renowned King Richard I., if we may put faith in old tradition. The poetical performances attributed to Richard are several *Sirventes* or *Serventois*,\* and his share in the song formerly composed

\* M. de la Rue shows that, originally and properly, a *Serventois*, or *Sirvente* (the former the northern, the latter

between them, which, according to the well-known story, discovered him in his prison to his faithful minstrel Blondel, the strain begun by the latter having been taken up and finished by the king. But all this, it must be confessed, is not so clear or certain as were to be desired. The song said to have been sung by Richard and Blondel was printed by Mademoiselle l'Héritier in her volume entitled '*La Tour Ténébreuse et les Jours Lumineux*,' 12mo. Paris, 1705; it is in mixed Norman and Provençal; but, unfortunately, the manuscript from which it professes to have been extracted is now unknown. Mlle. l'Héritier also prints as the composition of Richard a love-song in Norman French. But the most celebrated composition attributed to Richard is a poem addressed by him from his prison to his barons of England, Normandy, Poitou, and Gascony, remonstrating with them for suffering him to remain so long a captive. A Provençal version of this poem, one of the stanzas of which only had been previously quoted by Crescimbeni in his '*Istoria della Volgar Poesia*,' was first printed from a manuscript in the library of San Lorenzo at Florence by Horace Walpole, in his '*Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*,' 1758. It consists of six stanzas of six lines each, with an Envoy of five lines. Two English verse translations of it have been produced; one by Dr. Burney, in his *History of Music*, the other by the late Mr. George Ellis, which is given in Park's edition of the '*Royal and*

the southern term), was a poem relating to military affairs, from *serventagium* or *sirventagium*, the low Latin for *servitium*, services; according to the definition in Ducange, "*Poemata in quibus servientium seu militum facta et servitia referuntur.*"

Noble Authors.' More recently, the appearance of a version of the same poem in Norman French in Sismondi's '*Littérature du Midi de l'Europe*' (vol. i. p. 149) has raised the question in which of the two dialects it was originally written. Meanwhile the Provençal version has been more correctly republished by Raynouard in the fourth volume of his '*Choix des Poésies Originales des Troubadours*.' And the poetical reputation of Richard has been also enlarged by the appearance of another Provençal song claiming to be of his inditing in the '*Parnasse Occitanien*,' Toulouse, 1819. It cannot be said, however, that any or all of these effusions, supposing their authenticity to be admitted, tend to give us a high idea of the genius of the lion-hearted king in this line,—even if we should not go the length of Walpole, who declares the particular poem he has printed to be so poor a composition that the internal evidence weighs with him more than anything else to believe it of his majesty's own fabric.

#### ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE, A.D. 1066—1216.

The state of literature in England for the first century and a half after the Conquest may be sufficiently understood from these notices. Though to so great an extent imported, or otherwise of a foreign character, it will be perceived that it was by no means inconsiderable in point of amount. The period indeed was one of extraordinary excitement and activity in this as well as in other respects. Never since, probably, has there been so much Latin and French written among us in the same space of time. But this proves that both these languages, as we have said, were then generally read and understood; the

former by all persons who had had anything of a learned education, including in particular the numerous order of the clergy, both regular and secular; the latter by all the upper and probably also by a large proportion of even the middle classes, and of the town population generally.

In fact, the nearly entire absence of any English literature in this period seems to show that every man who could read at all was familiar with another language. The old Saxon, indeed, continued to be written down to the reign of Henry II., but the cessation of the Saxon Chronicle at the accession of that king may be taken as indicating that the language in which it was composed had then become obsolete and generally unintelligible, although in a modified or corrupted form it still subsisted as the common popular speech. The Anglo-Saxon was at this time circumstanced much as the Latin had been on the Continent for some centuries after the breaking up of the old Roman empire. Its original structure dissolved and lost, it was undergoing the process of fermentation which was to convert it into a new language; and in this state it was in truth wholly unfit for the purposes of literature—as much so as was the *lingua Romana rustica* of France, or Spain, or Italy from about the sixth century to the ninth.

What little besides the Saxon Chronicle, however, is known or conjectured to have been written in the vernacular tongue during this period may be said to be rather in Saxon than in English. Such are the metrical Scriptural paraphrase called ‘Ormulum,’ from its supposed author Orm, or Ormin, who probably lived in the reign of Henry II.; and the translation in verse of

Wace's French 'Brut' by Layamon, a priest of Ernleye upon Severn, as he calls himself, who belongs to the same era.\* In regard to several other pieces partaking more of the character of modern English, which Warton has given as belonging to this period, the late able and learned editor of the 'History of English Poetry' has remarked that, "judging from internal evidence, there is not one which may not safely be referred to the thirteenth century, and by far the greater number to the close of that period."†

\* A large extract from Layamon's work is given by Ellis, in his 'Historical Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the English Language,' prefixed to his 'Specimens of the Early English Poets,' vol. i. pp. 60-73 (edit. of 1811); and the entire chronicle is understood to be preparing for publication by Sir Frederick Madden, at the expense of the Society of Antiquaries.

† Warton's History of Eng. Poet. i. 7 (edit. of 1824).

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## BOOK II.

## ASCENDANCY OF THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY.

EVER since the appearance of Peter Lombard's Four Books of Sentences, about the middle of the twelfth century, a struggle for ascendancy had been going on throughout Europe between the Scholastic Theology, or new philosophy, and the grammatical and rhetorical studies with which men had previously been chiefly occupied. At first the natural advantages of its position told in favour of the established learning; nay, an impulse and a new inspiration were probably given to poetry and the belles-lettres for a time by the competition of logic and philosophy, and the general intellectual excitement thus produced: it was in the latter part of the twelfth century that the writing of Latin verse was cultivated with the greatest success; it was at the very end of that century, indeed, that Geoffrey de Vinesauf, as we have seen, composed and published his poem on the restoration of the legitimate mode of versification, under the title of 'Nova Poetria,' or the New Poetry. But from about this date the tide began to turn; and the first half of the thirteenth century may be described as the era of the

decline and fall of elegant literature, and the complete reduction of men's minds under the dominion of the scholastic logic and metaphysics.

In the University of Paris, and it was doubtless the same elsewhere, from about the middle of the thirteenth century, the ancient classics seem nearly to have ceased to be read; and all that was taught of rhetoric, or even of grammar, consisted of a few lessons from Priscian. The habit of speaking Latin correctly and elegantly, which had been so common an accomplishment of the scholars of the last age, was now generally lost: even at the universities, the classic tongue was corrupted into a base jargon, in which frequently all grammar and syntax were disregarded. This universal revolt from the study of words and of æsthetics to that of thoughts and of things is the most remarkable event in the intellectual history of the species. Undoubtedly all its results were not evil. On the whole, it was most probably the salvation even of that learning and elegant literature which it seemed for a time to have overwhelmed. The excitement of its very novelty awakened the minds of men. Never was there such a ferment of intellectual activity as now sprung up in Europe. The enthusiasm of the Crusades seemed to have been succeeded by an enthusiasm of study, which equally impelled its successive inundations of devotees. In the beginning of the fourteenth century there were thirty thousand students at the University of Oxford; and that of Paris could probably boast of the attendance of a still vaster multitude. This was something almost like a universal diffusion of education and knowledge. The brief revival of elegant literature in the twelfth century was a premature spring, which could not

last. The preliminary processes of vegetation were not sufficiently advanced to sustain any general or enduring efflorescence ; nor was the state of the world such as to call for or admit of any extensive spread of the kind of scholarship then cultivated. The probability is, that even if nothing else had taken its place, it would have gradually become feebler in character, as well as confined within a narrower circle of cultivators, till it had altogether evaporated and disappeared. The excitement of the new learning, turbulent and in some respects debasing as it was, saved Western Europe from the complete extinction of the light of scholarship and philosophy which would in that case have ensued, and kept alive the spirit of intellectual culture, though in the mean while imprisoned and limited in its vision, for a happier future time when it should have ampler scope and full freedom of range.

Almost the only studies now cultivated by the common herd of students were the Aristotelian logic and metaphysics. Yet it was not till after a struggle of some length that the supremacy of Aristotle was established in the schools. The most ancient statutes of the University of Paris that have been preserved, those issued by the pope's legate, Robert de Courçon, in 1215, prohibited the reading either of the metaphysical or the physical works of that philosopher, or of any abridgment of them. This, however, it has been remarked, was a mitigation of the treatment these books had met with a few years before, when all the copies of them that could be found were ordered to be thrown into the fire.\* Still more

\* Crevier, *Histoire de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 313.



lenient was a decree of Pope Gregory IX. in 1231, which only ordered the reading of them to be suspended until they should have undergone correction. Certain heretical notions in religion, promulgated or suspected to have been entertained by some of the most zealous of the early Aristotelians, had awakened the apprehensions of the church ; but the general orthodoxy of their successors quieted these fears ; and in course of time the authority of the Stagyrte was universally recognised both in theology and in the profane sciences.

Some of the most distinguished of the scholastic doctors of this period were natives of Britain. Such, in particular, were Alexander de Hales, styled the Irrefragable, an English Franciscan, who died at Paris in 1245, and who is famous as the master of St. Bonaventura, and the first of the long list of commentators on the Four Books of the Sentences ; the Subtle Doctor, John Duns Scotus, also a Franciscan and the chief glory of that order, who after teaching with unprecedented popularity and applause at Oxford and Paris, died at Cologne in 1308, at the early age of forty-three, leaving a mass of writings, the very quantity of which would be sufficiently wonderful, even if they were not marked with a vigour and penetration of thought which, down to our own day, has excited the admiration of all who have examined them ; and William Occam, the Invincible, another Franciscan, the pupil of Scotus, but afterwards his opponent on the great philosophical question of the origin and nature of Universals or General Terms, which so long divided, and still divides, logicians. Occam, who died at Munich in 1347, was the restorer, and perhaps the most able defender that the middle ages produced, of the doctrine of

Nominalism, or the opinion that general notions are merely names, and not real existences, as was contended by the Realists. The side taken by Occam was that of the minority in his own day, and for many ages after, and his views accordingly were generally regarded as heterodox in the schools; but his high merits have been recognised in modern times, when perhaps the greater number of speculators have come over to his way of thinking.

#### MATHEMATICAL AND OTHER STUDIES.

In the mathematical and physical sciences, Roger Bacon is the great name of the thirteenth century, and indeed the greatest that either his country or Europe can produce for some centuries after this time. He was born at Ilchester about the year 1214, and died in 1292. His writings that are still preserved, of which the principal is that entitled his *Opus Majus* (or Greater Work), show that the range of his investigations included theology, grammar, the ancient languages, geometry, astronomy, chronology, geography, music, optics, mechanics, chemistry, and most of the other branches of experimental philosophy. In all these sciences he had mastered whatever was then known; and his knowledge, though necessarily mixed with much error, extended in various directions considerably farther than, but for the evidence of his writings, we should have been warranted in believing that scientific researches had been carried in that age. In optics, for instance, he not only understood the general laws of reflected and refracted light, and had at least conceived such an instrument as a telescope, but he makes some advances towards an explanation of the phe-

nomenon of the rainbow. It may be doubted whether what have been sometimes called his inventions and discoveries in mechanics and in chemistry were for the greater part more than notions he had formed of the possibility of accomplishing certain results ; but, even regarded as mere speculations or conjectures, many of his statements of what might be done show that he was familiar with mechanical principles, and possessed a considerable acquaintance with the powers of natural agents. He appears to have been acquainted with the effects and composition of gunpowder, which indeed there is other evidence for believing to have been then known in Europe. Bacon's notions on the right method of philosophizing are remarkably enlightened for the times in which he lived ; and his general views upon most subjects evince a penetration and liberality much beyond the spirit of his age. With all his sagacity and freedom from prejudice, indeed, he was a believer both in astrology and alchemy ; but, as it has been observed, these delusions did not then stand in the same predicament as now : they were "irrational only because unproved, and neither impossible nor unworthy of the investigation of a philosopher, in the absence of preceding experiments."\* Another eminent English cultivator of mathematical science in that age was the celebrated Robert Grossetête, or Grosthead, Bishop of Lincoln, the friend and patron of Bacon. Grostête, who died in 1253, and of whom we shall have more to say presently, is the author of a treatise on the sphere, which had been printed. A third name that deserves to be mentioned along with these is

\* Penny Cyclopædia, iii. 243.

that of Sir Michael Scott, famous in popular tradition as a practitioner of the occult sciences, but whom his writings, of which several are extant and have been printed, prove to have been possessed of acquirements, both in science and literature, of which few in those times could boast. He is commonly assumed to have been proprietor of the estate of Balwearie, in Fife, and to have survived till near the close of the thirteenth century ; but all that is certain is that he was a native of Scotland, and one of the most distinguished of the learned persons who flourished at the court of the Emperor Frederick II., who died in 1250.\* Like Roger Bacon, Scott was addicted to the study of alchemy and astrology ; but these were in his eyes also parts of natural philosophy. Among other works, a History of Animals is ascribed to him ; and he is said to have translated several of the works of Aristotle from the Greek into Latin, at the command of the Emperor Frederick. He is reputed to have been eminently skilled both in astronomy and medicine ; and a contemporary, John Bacon, himself known by the title of Prince of the Averroists, or followers of the Arabian doctor Averroes, celebrates him as a great theologian.†

These instances, however, were rare exceptions to the general rule. Metaphysics and logic, together with divinity—which was converted into little else than a subject of metaphysical and logical contention—so occupied the crowd of intellectual inquirers, that, except the professional branches of law and medicine, scarcely any other studies were generally attended to. Roger Bacon himself tells us that he knew of only two good mathe-

\* See article in Penny Cyclopædia, xxi. 101.

† See an article on Michael Scott in Bayle.

maticians among his contemporaries—one John of Leyden, who had been a pupil of his own, and another whom he does not name, but who is supposed to have been John Peckham, a Franciscan friar, who afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury. Few students of the science, he says, proceeded further than the fifth proposition of the first book of Euclid—the well-known asses' bridge. The study of geometry was still confounded in the popular understanding with the study of magic—a proof that it was a very rare pursuit. In arithmetic, although the Arabic numerals had found their way to Christian Europe before the middle of the fourteenth century, they do not appear to have come into general use till a considerably later date. Astronomy, however, was sufficiently cultivated at the University of Paris to enable some of the members to predict an eclipse of the sun which happened on the 31st of January, 1310.\* This science was indebted for part of the attention it received to the belief that was universally entertained in the influence of the stars over human affairs. And, as astrology led to the cultivation and improvement of astronomy, so the other imaginary science of alchemy undoubtedly aided the progress of chemistry and medicine. Besides Roger Bacon and Michael Scott in the thirteenth century, England contributed the names of John Dautstein, of Richard, and of Cremer Abbot of Westminster, the disciple and friend of the famous Raymond Lully, to the list of the writers on alchemy in the fourteenth. Lully himself visited England in the reign of Edward I., on the invitation of the king; and he affirms in one of

\* Crevier, ii. 224.

his works, that, in the secret chamber of St. Katharine in the Tower of London, he performed in the royal presence the experiment of transmuting some crystal into a mass of diamond, or adamant as he calls it, of which Edward, he says, caused some little pillars to be made for the tabernacle of God. It was popularly believed, indeed, at the time, that the English king had been furnished by Lully with a great quantity of gold for defraying the expense of an expedition he intended to make to the Holy Land. Edward III. was not less credulous on this subject than his grandfather, as appears by an order which he issued in 1329, in the following terms:—“ Know all men, that we have been assured that John of Rous and Master William of Dalby know how to make silver by the art of alchemy ; that they have made it in former times, and still continue to make it ; and, considering that these men, by their art, and by making the precious metal, may be profitable to us and to our kingdom, we have commanded our well-beloved Thomas Cary to apprehend the aforesaid John and William, wherever they can be found, within liberties or without, and bring them to us, together with all the instruments of their art, under safe and sure custody.” The earliest English writer on medicine, whose works have been printed, is Gilbert English (or Anglicus), who flourished in the thirteenth century ; and he was followed in the next century by John de Gaddesden. The practice of medicine had now been taken in a great measure out of the hands of the clergy ; but the art was still in the greater part a mixture of superstition and quackery, although the knowledge of some useful remedies, and perhaps also of a few principles, had been obtained from the writings of

the Arabic physicians (many of which had been translated into Latin) and from the instructions delivered in the schools of Spain and Italy. The distinction between the physician and the apothecary was now well understood. Surgery also began to be followed as a separate branch: some works are still extant, partly printed, partly in manuscript, by John Arden, or Arden, an eminent English surgeon, who practised at Newark in the fourteenth century. A lively picture of the state of the surgical art at this period is given by a French writer, Guy de Cauliac, in a system of surgery which he published in 1363: "The practitioners in surgery," he says, "are divided into five sects. The first follow Roger and Roland, and the four masters, and apply poultices to all wounds and abscesses; the second follow Brunus and Theodoric, and in the same cases use wine only; the third follow Saliceto and Lanfranc, and treat wounds with ointments and soft plasters; the fourth are chiefly Germans, who attend the armies, and promiscuously use charms, potions, oil, and wool; the fifth are old women and ignorant people, who have recourse to the saints in all cases."

Yet the true method of philosophising, by experiment and the collection of facts, was almost as distinctly and emphatically laid down in this age by Roger Bacon, as it was more than three centuries afterwards by his illustrious namesake. Much knowledge, too, must necessarily have been accumulated in various departments by the actual application of this method. Some of the greatest of the modern chemists have bestowed the highest praise on the manner in which the experiments of the alchemists, or hermetic philosophers, as they called themselves, on

medals and other natural substances appear to have been conducted. In another field—namely, in that of geography, and the institutions, customs and general state of distant countries—a great deal of new information must have been acquired from the accounts that were now published by various travellers, especially by Marco Polo, who penetrated as far as to Tartary and China, in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and by our countryman, Sir John Mandevil, who also traversed a great part of the East about a hundred years later. Roger Bacon has inserted a very curious epitome of the geographical knowledge of his time in his ‘*Opus Majus*.’

#### UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.

About the middle of the thirteenth century, both in England and elsewhere, the universities began to assume a new form, by the erection of colleges for the residence of their members as separate communities. The zeal for learning that was displayed in these endowments is the most honourable characteristic of the age. Before the end of the fourteenth century the following colleges were founded at Oxford:—University Hall, by William, Archdeacon of Durham, who died in 1249; Baliol College, by John Baliol, father of King John of Scotland, about 1263; Merton College, by Walter Merton, Bishop of Rochester, in 1268; Exeter College, by Walter Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, about 1315; Oriel College, originally called the Hall of the Blessed Virgin of Oxford, by Edward II. and his almoner, Adam de Brom, about 1324; Queen’s College, by Robert Eglesfield, chaplain to Queen Philippa, in 1340; and New College, in 1379, by the celebrated William of Wykeham, Bishop of Win-



chester, the munificent founder also of Winchester School or College. In the University of Cambridge the foundations were, Peter House, by Hugh Balsham, Sub-prior and afterwards Bishop of Ely, about 1256; Michael College (afterwards incorporated with Trinity College), by Herby de Stanton, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward II., about 1324; University Hall (soon afterwards burnt down), by Richard Badew, Chancellor of the University, in 1326; King's Hall (afterwards united to Trinity College), by Edward III.; Clare Hall, a restoration of University Hall, by Elizabeth de Clare, Countess of Ulster, about 1347; Pembroke Hall, or the Hall of Valence and Mary, in the same year, by Mary de St. Paul, widow of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke; Trinity Hall, in 1350, by William Bateman, Bishop of Norwich; Gonvil Hall, about the same time, by Edmond Gonvil, parson of Terrington and Rushworth, in Norfolk; and Corpus Christi, or Bennet College, about 1351, by the United Guilds of Corpus Christi and St. Mary, in the town of Cambridge. The erection of these colleges, besides the accommodations which they afforded in various ways both to teachers and students, gave a permanent establishment to the universities, which they scarcely before possessed. The original condition of these celebrated seats of learning, in regard to all the conveniences of teaching, appears to have been humble in the extreme. Great disorders and scandals are also said to have arisen, before the several societies were thus assembled each within its own walls, from the intermixture of the students with the townspeople, and their exemption from all discipline. But, when the members of the University were counted by tens of thousands,

discipline, even in the most advantageous circumstances, must have been nearly out of the question. The difficulty would not be lessened by the general character of the persons composing the learned mob, if we may take it from the quaint historian of the University of Oxford. Many of them, Anthony à Wood affirms, were mere "varlets who pretended to be scholars:" he does not scruple to charge them with being habitually guilty of thieving and other enormities; and he adds, "They lived under no discipline, neither had any tutors, but only for fashion sake would sometimes thrust themselves into the schools at ordinary lectures, and, when they went to perform any mischiefs, then would they be accounted scholars, that so they might free themselves from the jurisdiction of the burghers." To repress the evils of this state of things, the old statutes of the University of Paris, in 1215, had ordained that no one should be reputed a scholar who had not a certain master. Another of these ancient regulations may be quoted in illustration of the simplicity of the times, and of the small measure of pomp and circumstance that the heads of the commonwealth of learning could then affect. It is ordered that every master reading lectures in the faculty of arts should have his cloak or gown round, black, and falling as low as the heels, "at least," adds the statute, with amusing *naïveté*, "while it is new." But this famous seminary long continued to take pride in its poverty as one of its most honourable distinctions. There is something very noble and affecting in the terms in which the rector and masters of the faculty of arts are found petitioning, in 1362, for a postponement of the hearing of a cause in which they were parties. "We have difficulty," they

say, "in finding the money to pay the procurators and advocates, whom it is necessary for us to employ—we *whose profession it is to possess no wealth.*"\* Yet, when funds were wanted for important purposes in connexion with learning or science, they were supplied in this age with no stinted liberality. We have seen with what alacrity opulent persons came forward to build and endow colleges, as soon as the expediency of such foundations came to be perceived. In almost all these establishments more or less provision was made for the permanent maintenance of a body of poor scholars, in other words, for the admission of even the humblest classes to a share in the benefits of that learned education whose temples and priesthood were thus planted in the land. It is probable, also, that the same kind of liberality was often shown in other ways. Roger Bacon tells us himself that, in the twenty years in which he had been engaged in his experiments, he had spent in books and instruments no less a sum than two thousand French livres, an amount of silver equal to about six thousand pounds of our present money, and in effective value certainly to many times that sum. He must have been indebted for these large supplies to the generosity of rich friends and patrons.

**LATIN HISTORICAL WRITERS :—**ROGER DE WENDOVER.—  
 MATTHEW PARIS.—RISHANGER.—BROMTON.—WIKES.  
 —HEMINGFORD.—TRIVET.—MURIMUTH.—KNYGHTON.  
 —STUBBES.—THORN.—HIGDEN.—FORDUN.—CHRONI-  
 CLE OF LANERCAST.

Notwithstanding the general neglect of its elegancies, and of the habit of speaking it correctly or grammatically,

\* Crevier, ii. 404.

the Latin tongue still continued to be in England, as elsewhere, the common language of the learned, and that in which books were generally written that were intended for their perusal. Among this class of works may be included the contemporary chronicles, most of which were compiled in the monasteries, and the authors of almost all of which were churchmen. The Chronicle of Roger de Wendover, hitherto existing only in MS., and in a single copy, has lately been published, in the greater part, by the Rev. Henry O. Coxe, for the English Historical Society, under the title of '*Rogeri de Wendover Chronica, sive Flores Historiarum*,' 4 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1841-42. The portion omitted is merely the First Book, which contains the space from the creation to the commencement of the Christian era, and is abridged in the '*Flores Historiarum*' bearing the name of Matthew of Westminster, together with the first 446 years of Book Second, in which there is equally little that is peculiar or important. The remainder of the narrative comes down to the year 1235 (the 19th of Henry III.), and is very valuable. Wendover, who was probably a native of the place of that name in Buckinghamshire, became a monk and precentor in the Benedictine monastery of St. Albans, and died Prior of Belvoir, in a cell of that house, on the 6th of May, 1237. He has compiled the earlier portion of his work from Bede, Marianus Scotus, some of the Byzantine writers, Malmesbury, Florence of Worcester, Henry of Huntingdon, and the other best and most reputable of preceding chroniclers, and in a very workmanlike manner. Mr. Coxe holds him to be quite as good a writer as Matthew Paris, whose more celebrated History is, down to the point

where that of Wendover ends, copied from him with few alterations, and those, Mr. Coxe declares, mostly for the worse even in point of expression. Mr. Coxe also vindicates the claim of Wendover to the authorship of the portion of the Chronicle bearing his name which has been thus transcribed by Paris, in answer to some remarks by Mr. Halliwell in the introduction to his late edition of Rishanger's Chronicle of the Barons' Wars.

The most celebrated English historian of the thirteenth century, however, is Matthew Paris, who was another monk of the same great monastery of St. Albans, and was also much employed in affairs of state during the reign of Henry III. He died in 1259; and his principal work, entitled '*Historia Major*' (the Greater History), begins at the Norman Conquest, and comes down to that year. Matthew Paris is one of the most spirited and rhetorical of our old Latin historians; and the extraordinary freedom with which he expresses himself, in regard especially to the usurpations of the court of Rome, forms a striking contrast to the almost uniform tone of his monkish brethren. Nor does he show less boldness in animadverting upon the vices and delinquencies of kings and of the great in general. These qualities have in modern times gained him much admiration among writers of one party, and much obloquy from those of another. His work has always been bitterly decried by the Roman Catholics, who at one time, indeed, were accustomed to maintain that much of what appeared in the printed copies of it was the interpolation of its Protestant editors. This charge has now been abandoned; but an eminent Catholic historian of the present day has not hesitated to denounce the narrative of the

monk of St. Albans as "a romance rather than a history," on the ground of the great discrepancy which he asserts he has found between it and authentic records or contemporary writers, in most instances when he could confront the one with the other.\* The '*Historia Major*' of Matthew Paris was first printed at London in 1571, under the care of Archbishop Parker; and it has been republished at Zurich in 1606; at London, under the care of Dr. William Wats, in 1640; at Paris in 1644; and at London in 1684. All these editions are in folio. An excellent French translation, by M. A. Huillard-Bréholles, has lately been published under the superintendence, or at the cost, of the Duc de Luynes, in 9 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1840-41, with a few notes by the translator, but without the Introduction by the duke, promised on the title-page—at least in the only copy of the work that has fallen in our way. An English translation, by Dr. J. A. Giles, has also been announced, but we believe it has not yet appeared. To the edition published by Dr. Wats, and those that have followed it, are appended some other historical pieces of the author; and there also exists, in MS., an abridgment of the '*Historia Major*,' drawn up by himself, and generally referred to as the '*Historia Minor*.' The History of Matthew Paris was continued by William Rishanger, another monk of the same abbey, whose narrative appears to have come down to the year 1322 (the 15th of Edward II.), although no complete copy is now in existence, and only the earlier part, extending to the death of Henry III. (A.D. 1272), has been printed. It is at the end of Wats's

\* Dr. Lingard, *Hist. of Eng.* iii. 160, edit. of 1837.

edition of Matthew Paris. Rishanger is also the author of several other historical tracts, one of the most curious of which, his *Chronicle of the Barons' Wars* (preserved in a single MS., with the title of '*De Bellis Lewes et Evesham*'), has been lately printed for the Camden Society, under the care of Mr. James Orchard Halliwell, 4to. Lond. 1840. To Rishanger's narrative Mr. Halliwell has appended a collection of miracles attributed to Simon de Montfort, from another MS. in the Cotton Library. What is commonly called the *Chronicle of John Bromton*, and is printed among the *Decem Scriptores* (pp. 721-1284) under the titles of '*Chronicon Johannis Bromton*,' and '*Joralanensis Historia, a Johanne Brompton, Abbate Jornalensi, Conscripta*,' has been shown by Selden, in his most learned and curious preface to that collection, not to be either the composition of Bromton, or in any sense a *Chronicle of Jorevale or Jerevaux*, of which monastery in Yorkshire, Bromton, Brompton, or Bramton, was abbot. The book was merely procured for the library of that house while he presided over it, and probably through his means. It does not appear from Selden's account when Bromton lived; but he has proved (p. xli.) that the *Chronicle* must have been written in or after the year 1328, or the second of Edward III. At the commencement the author intimates that it is his design to bring it down to the time of Edward I., but it terminates with the death of Richard I. (A.D. 1199), having set out from the conversion of the Saxons by St. Augustin. It is not therefore, in any part of it, a contemporary history; but the writer has gleaned from some authorities which we do not now possess, and he gives many details which have not elsewhere been

preserved. Among the other Latin chroniclers of this period, whose works have been printed, the following are the principal:—Thomas Wikes, or Wyeke, in Latin *Wiccius*, canon regular of Osney, near Oxford, whose chronicle, otherwise called the *Chronicle of the Church of Salisbury*, fills from p. 21 to p. 129 of Gale's '*Scriptores Quinque*,' and, as there printed, extends from the Conquest to the year 1304, although it is afterwards intimated (p. 595) that the last ten pages of it are by another hand; Walter Hemingford, or, as Leland calls him, *Hemingoburgus*, a monk of Gisborough in Yorkshire, the portion of whose work extending from the Conquest to the year 1273 (being the first three books) was printed by Gale in the same collection (pp. 453-595), and the remainder, comprehending the reigns of Edward I., Edward II., and the first twenty years of that of Edward III., by Hearne, in 2 vols. 8vo., at Oxford, in 1731; Robert de Avesbury, register of the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose history of the reign of Edward III., '*Historia de Mirabilibus Gestis Edwardi III.*,' which is esteemed for its accuracy, but comes down only to A.D. 1356, was published by Hearne, in 8vo., at Oxford, in 1720; Nicolas Trivet, whose clear and exact history of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II., Richard I., John, Henry III., and Edward I. (or from A.D. 1135 to 1307), is printed in both editions of Father d'Achery's '*Spicilegium*' (1671 and 1723), and was also published separately by Anthony Hall, with the title of '*Nicolai Triveti Dominicani Annales Sex Regum Angliæ*,' in 8vo., at Oxford, in 1719; Adam Murimuth, whose short chronicle, extending from A.D. 1303 to 1337, along with a continuation by an anonymous writer to



1380, was printed by Hall as a second volume to his *Trivet* in 1721; Henry de Knyghton (or Cnifton, as he himself spells the name), a canon of Leicester, the author of a *History of English affairs* from the time of the Saxon King Edgar to the death of Richard II., which is printed among the '*Decem Scriptores*' (pp. 2297-2742); and the two ecclesiastical historians, Thomas Stubbs and William Thorne, the *Chronicle of the acts of the Archbishops of York* to A.D. 1373 by the former of whom, and that of the Abbots of St. Augustin's monastery at Canterbury to 1397 by the latter, are in the same collection (pp. 1685-1734, and 1753-2202). The original Latin '*Polychronicon*' of Ranulph or Ralph Higden, monk of St. Werburg's in Chester, which ends in 1357, still remains, for the greater part, in MS., only the portion of it relating to the period of English history before the Norman Conquest having been published by Gale among his '*Scriptores Quindecim*' (pp. 177-289); but an English translation of the whole by John de Trevisa, who was vicar of Berkeley in Gloucestershire towards the close of the fourteenth century, was printed, in folio, at Westminster, by Caxton in 1482, at the same place by Wynken de Worde in 1485, and at Southwark in 1517, and again in 1527. Besides many insertions, Caxton has added a continuation of the *History* down to 1460; but it appears that he has also omitted several passages which are found in Trevisa's MS. now in the Harleian collection. John Fordun, the earliest of the regular Scottish chroniclers, also belongs to the fourteenth century. His *History*, entitled '*Scotichronicon*,' beginning with the creation, comes down only to the end of the reign of David I. (A.D. 1153), but is continued.

by Walter Bower, abbot of Inchcolm, to the death of James I. (A.D. 1437), the materials for the space from 1153 to 1385 having been collected by Fordun. The portion of the 'Scotichronicon' actually written by Fordun, being the first five of the sixteen books, was printed by Gale among his 'Scriptores Quindecim' (pp. 563-701); and the whole was published by Hearne, at Oxford, in 5 vols. 8vo. in 1722, and again by Walter Goodall, at Edinburgh, in 2 vols. folio, in 1759. The most important of the monastic chronicles belonging to this period which has been preserved is that called (it does not appear for what reason) the Chronicle of Lanercost, which has lately been printed for the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs, under the superintendence of Mr. Joseph Stevenson, 4to. Edinburgh, 1839. Before this it existed only in one or two very incorrect modern transcripts, and in a single original codex (the Cotton MS. D. vii.), where it is appended, without any break, to an imperfect copy of what is printed by Savile as Hoveden's History. Hoveden ends on the reverse of what is numbered as folio 172 of the MS., having filled from folio 66 inclusive: the continuation, or Lanercost Chronicle, goes on in one handwriting to the end of the volume on the reverse of fol. 242. The time which it comprehends is from A.D. 1201 to 1346; and Mr. Stevenson thinks that it was transcribed about the latter date from the contemporary register kept, most probably, in the Minorite monastery of Carlisle. As printed it fills 352 4to. pages; and it abounds in curious and valuable information relating to the course of events both in England and in Scotland during the period over which it extends.

## THE LATIN LANGUAGE.—ORIENTAL TONGUES.—GREEK.

Latin was also, for a great part of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the usual language of the law, at least in writing. All the charters of liberties are in Latin. So is every statute down to the year 1275. The first that is in French is the Statute of Westminster the First, passed in that year, the 3rd of Edward I. Throughout the remainder of the reign of Edward they are sometimes in Latin, sometimes in French, but more frequently in the former language. The French becomes more frequent in the time of Edward II., and is almost exclusively used in that of Edward III. and Richard II. Still there are statutes in Latin in the sixth and eighth years of the last-mentioned king. It is not improbable that, from the accession of Edward I., the practice may have been to draw up every statute in both languages. Of the law treatises, Bracton and Fleta are in Latin; Britton and the *Miroir des Justices*, in French.

Latin was not only the language in which all the scholastic divines and philosophers wrote, but was also employed by all writers on geometry, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, and the other branches of mathematical and natural science. All the works of Roger Bacon, for example, are in Latin; and it is worth noting that, although by no means a writer of classical purity, this distinguished cultivator of science is still one of the most correct writers of his time. He was indeed not a less zealous student of literature than of science, nor less anxious for the improvement of the one than of the other: accustomed himself to read the works of Aristotle in the original Greek, he denounces as mischievous impositions

the wretched Latin translations by which alone they were known to the generality of his contemporaries: he warmly recommends the study of grammar and the ancient languages generally; and deplotes the little attention paid to the Oriental tongues in particular, of which he says there were not in his time more than three or four persons in Western Europe who knew anything. It is remarkable that the most strenuous effort made within the present period to revive the study of this last-mentioned learning proceeded from another eminent cultivator of natural science, the famous Raymond Lully, half philosopher, half quack, as it has been the fashion to regard him. It was at his instigation that Clement V., in 1311, with the approbation of the Council of Vienne, published a constitution, ordering that professors of Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic should be established in the universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca. He had, more than twenty years before, urged the same measure upon Honorius IV., and its adoption then was only prevented by the death of that pope. After all, it is doubtful if the papal ordinance was ever carried into effect. There were, however, professors of strange, or foreign, languages at Paris a few years after this time, as appears from an epistle of Pope John XXII. to his legate there in 1325, in which the latter is enjoined to keep watch over the said professors, lest they should introduce any dogmas as strange as the languages they taught.\*

Many additional details are collected by Warton in his 'Dissertation on the Introduction of Learning into

\* Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, ii. 112, 227.

England.' He is inclined to think that many Greek manuscripts found their way into Europe from Constantinople in the time of the Crusades. "Robert Grossthead, Bishop of London," he proceeds, "an universal scholar, and no less conversant in polite letters than the most abstruse sciences, cultivated and patronised the study of the Greek language. This illustrious prelate, who is said to have composed almost two hundred books, read lectures in the school of the Franciscan friars at Oxford about the year 1230. He translated Dionysius the Areopagite and Damascenus into Latin. He greatly facilitated the knowledge of Greek by a translation of Suidas's Lexicon, a book in high repute among the lower Greeks, and at that time almost a recent compilation. He promoted John of Basingstoke to the archdeaconry of Leicester, chiefly because he was a Greek scholar, and possessed many Greek manuscripts, which he is said to have brought from Athens into England. He entertained, as a domestic in his palace, Nicholas, chaplain of the Abbot of St. Albans, surnamed *Græcus*, from his uncommon proficiency in Greek; and by his assistance he translated from Greek into Latin the testaments of the twelve patriarchs. Grossthead had almost incurred the censure of excommunication for preferring a complaint to the pope that most of the opulent benefices in England were occupied by Italians. But this practice, although notoriously founded on the monopolising and arbitrary spirit of papal imposition, and a manifest act of injustice to the English clergy, probably contributed to introduce many learned foreigners into England, and to propagate philological literature." \* "Bishop Grossthead," Warton

\* Hist. of Eng. Poet. i. clxxiii.

adds, "is also said to have been profoundly skilled in the Hebrew language. William the Conqueror permitted great numbers of Jews to come over from Rouen, and to settle in England, about the year 1087. Their multitude soon increased, and they spread themselves in vast bodies throughout most of the cities and capital towns in England, where they built synagogues. There were fifteen hundred at York about the year 1189. At Bury in Suffolk is a very complete remain of a Jewish synagogue of stone, in the Norman style, large and magnificent. Hence it was that many of the learned English ecclesiastics of those times became acquainted with their books and language. In the reign of William Rufus, at Oxford the Jews were remarkably numerous, and had acquired a considerable property; and some of their rabbis were permitted to open a school in the university, where they instructed not only their own people, but many Christian students, in the Hebrew literature, about the year 1054. Within two hundred years after their admission or establishment by the Conqueror, they were banished the kingdom. This circumstance was highly favourable to the circulation of their learning in England. The suddenness of their dismissal obliged them, for present subsistence, and other reasons, to sell their moveable goods of all kinds, among which were large quantities of Rabbinical books. The monks in various parts availed themselves of the distribution of these treasures. At Huntingdon and Stamford there was a prodigious sale of their effects, containing immense stores of Hebrew manuscripts, which were immediately purchased by Gregory of Huntingdon, Prior of the Abbey of Ramsey. Gregory speedily became an adept in the Hebrew, by means of

these valuable acquisitions, which he bequeathed to his monastery about the year 1250. Other members of the same convent, in consequence of these advantages, are said to have been equal proficient in the same language, soon after the death of Prior Gregory; among whom were Robert Dodford, librarian of Ramsey, and Laurence Holbeck, who compiled a Hebrew Lexicon. At Oxford, great multitudes of their books fell into the hands of Roger Bacon, or were bought by his brethren, the Franciscan friars of that university.\* Some of the dates here given by Warton do not agree with that of the general expulsion of the Jews from England, which did not take place till the year 1290, in the reign of Edward I.; but they had been repeatedly subjected to sudden violence, both from the populace and from the government, before that grand catastrophe.

## THE FRENCH LANGUAGE.

The French language, however, was still in common and popular use among us down to the latter part of the reign of Edward III. It is well remarked by Pinkerton that we are to date the cessation of the general use of French in this country from the opening of "the inveterate enmity" between the two nations in the reign of that king.† Higden, as we have

\* Hist. of Eng. Poet. i. p. clxxiv

† Essay on the Origin of Scottish Poetry, prefixed to Ancient Scottish Poems, 1786, vol. i. p. lxiii. Some curious remarks upon the peculiar political position in which England was held to stand in relation to France in the first reigns after the Conquest may be read in Gale's Preface to his 'Scriptores Quindecim.'

seen, writing before this change had taken place, tells us that French was still in his day the language which the children of gentlemen were taught to speak from their cradle, and the only language that was allowed to be used by boys at school ; the effect of which was, that even the country people generally understood it and affected its use. The tone, however, in which this is stated by Higden indicates that the public feeling had already begun to set in against these customs, and that, if they still kept their ground from use and wont, they had lost their hold upon any firmer or surer stay. Accordingly about a quarter of a century or thirty years later his translator Trevisa finds it necessary to subjoin the following explanation or correction :—" This maner was myche yused tofore the first moreyn [before the first inurraïn or plague, which happened in 1349], and is siththe som dele [somewhat] ychaungide ; for John Cornwaile, a maister of gramer, chaungide the lore [learning] in gramer scole and construction of [from] Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencriche lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Pencriche ; so that now, the zere of owre Lord a thousand thre hundred foure score and fyve, of the secunde King Rychard after the Conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of England children leveth Frensh, and construeth and lerneth an [in] Englisch, and haveth thereby avauntage in oon [one] side and desavauntage in another. Her [their] avauntage is, that thei lerneth her gramer in lasse tyme than children were wont to do ; desavauntage is, that now children of gramer scole kunne[n]th [know] no more Frensch than can her lifte [knows their left] heele ; and that is harm for hem [them], and [if] thei schul passe the see and travaile



in strange londes, and in many other places also : also gentlemen haveth now mych ylefte for to teche her [their] children Frensch."\* A few years before this, in 1362 (the 36th of Edward III.), was passed the statute ordaining that all pleas pleaded in the king's courts should be pleaded in the English language, and entered and enrolled in Latin ; the pleadings till now having been in French, and the enrolments sometimes in French, sometimes in Latin. The reasons assigned for this change in the preamble of the act are, "because it is often showed to the king by the prelates, dukes, earls, barons, and all the commonalty, of the great mischiefs which have happened to divers of the realm, because the laws, customs, and statutes of this realm be not commonly holden and kept in the same realm, for that they be pleaded, showed, and judged in the French tongue, which is much unknown in the said realm, so that the people which do implead, or be impleaded, in the king's court, and in the courts of other, have no knowledge nor understanding of that which is said for them or against them by their sergents and other pleaders ; and that reasonably the said laws and customs the rather shall be perceived and known, and better understood, in the tongue used in the said realm, and by so much every man of the said realm may the better govern himself without offending of the law, and the better keep, save, and defend his heritage and possessions ; and in divers regions and countries, where the king, the nobles, and other of the said realm have been, good governance and full right is done to every person, because that their laws and customs

\* As quoted by Tyrwhitt, from Harl. MS. 1900, in *Essay on Language*, &c. of Chaucer.

be learned and used in the tongue of the country." Yet, oddly enough, this very statute (of which we have here quoted the old translation) is in French, which, whatever might be the case with the great body of the people, continued down to a considerably later date than this to be the mother tongue of our Norman royal family, and probably also that generally spoken at court and at least in the upper house of parliament. Ritson asserts that there is no instance in which Henry III. is known to have expressed himself in English. "King Edward I. generally," he continues, "or, according to Andrew of Wyntoun, constantly, spoke the French language, both in the council and in the field, many of his sayings in that idiom being recorded by our old historians. When, in the council at Norham, in 1291-2, Anthony Beck had, as it is said, proved to the king, by reason and eloquence, that Bruce was too dangerous a neighbour to be king of Scotland, his majesty replied, *Par le sang de dieu, vous aves bien eschanté*, and accordingly adjudged the crown to Baliol; of whom, refusing to obey his summons, he afterward said, *A ce fol felon tel folie fais? S'il ne vould venir à nous, nous viendrons à lui*.\* There is but one instance of his speaking English; which was when the great sultan sent ambassadors, after his assassination, to protest that he had no knowledge of it. These, standing at a distance, adored the king, prone on the ground; and Edward said in English (*in Anglico*), *You, indeed, adore, but you little love, me*. Nor understood they his words, because they spoke to him by an inter-

\* For these two speeches, the latter of which, by the by, he points as if he did not understand it, Ritson quotes the *Scotichronicon* (Fordun), ii. 147, 156.

preter.\* King Edward II., likewise, who married a French princess, used himself the French tongue. Sir Henry Spelman had a manuscript, in which was a piece of poetry entitled *De le roi Edward le fiz roi Edward, le chanson qu'il fist mesmes*, which Lord Orford was unacquainted with. His son Edward III. always wrote his letters or dispatches in French, as we find them preserved by Robert of Avesbury; and in the early part of his reign even the Oxford scholars were confined in conversation to Latin or French.† . . . There is a single instance preserved of this monarch's use of the English language. He appeared in 1349 in a tournament at Canterbury with a white swan for his impress, and the following motto embroidered on his shield:—

Hay, hay, the wythe swan!  
By Godes soul I am thy man!‡

Lewis Beaumont, Bishop of Durham, 1317, understood not a word of either Latin or English. In reading the bull of his appointment, which he had been taught to spell for several days before, he stumbled upon the word *metropolitice*, which he in vain endeavoured to pronounce; and, having hammered over it a considerable time, at last cried out, in his mother tongue, *Seit pour dite! Par Seynt Lowys, il ne fu pas curteis qui ceste parole ici escrit.*§ The first instance of the English lan-

\* For this anecdote Ritson quotes Hemingford (in Gale), p. 591.

† The authority for this last statement is a note in Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poet. i. 6 (edit. of 1824).

‡ See Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poet. i. 251 (ii. 86, in edit. of 1824). He had another, 'It is as it is;' and may have had a third, 'Ha St. Edward! Ha St. George.'

§ Robert de Graystanes, *Anglia Sacra*, i. 761—"Take it

guage which Mr. Tyrwhitt had discovered in the parliamentary proceedings was the confession of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, in 1398. He might, however, have met with a petition of the mercers of London ten years earlier (*Rot. Parl.* iii. 225). The oldest English instrument produced by Rymer is dated 1368 (vii. 526); but an indenture in the same idiom betwixt the abbot and convent of Whitby, and Robert the son of John Bustard, dated at York in 1343,\* is the earliest known." †

ANGLO-NORMAN POETS :—MARIE DE FRANCE.—DENYS PYRAM.—GROSSE-TETE.—WADINGTON.

French metrical romances and other poetry, accordingly, continued to be written in England, and in many instances by Englishmen, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Of the Anglo-Norman poets of this period one of the most famous is a lady, Marie, who describes herself as of France, but who appears to have resided in England in the time of Henry III. Her poems—consisting principally of 'Lais,' ‡ or lays, the subjects of which she professes to have found in the Bas Breton, or Celtic tongue of Britany, and of Fables in the manner of Æsop, translated, she says, from an English as said! By St. Lewis, he was not very civil who wrote this word here."

\* Charlton's *History of Whitby*, 247.

† Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy, pp. lxxv.-lxxxvi. We have not thought it necessary to preserve Ritson's peculiar spelling, adopted, apparently, on no principle except that of deviating from the established usage.

‡ The derivation of this word remains an unsolved puzzle, or at least a subject of dispute, among the etymologists. It has been conjectured to be the same word with *lie* (a falsehood).

version made by a king of England, by which she probably means an Anglo-Saxon collection attributed to Alfred the Great, although another theory is that she refers to a work by Henry I.—were first brought into notice by Tyrwhitt (Introductory Discourse to the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer, notes 24 and 29); they were afterwards made the subject of a paper by the Abbé de la Rue, in the *Archæologia* (vol. xiii. pp. 35-67, published in 1797); and they have since been published by M. B. de Roquefort under the title of '*Poésies de Marie de France, ou Recueil de Lais, Fables, et autres productions de cette emme célèbre,*' 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1820. An account, including nearly a complete translation, of the '*Lais,*' which are twelve in number (besides two which M. de Roquefort has printed, apparently without any authority for assigning them to Marie), is given by Ellis in his '*Early English Metrical Romances*' (Appendix ii. to '*Introduction,*' pp. 143-200\*); and the reader may also consult what has been written about Marie by Ritson, in a note to the romance of *Emare* (*Ancient English Metrical Romances*, iii. 330), by Mr. Price, in a long and elaborate note upon Warton (*Hist. of Eng. Poet.*, i. lxxiv.-lxxxvi.), and by the Abbé de la Rue (in his *Essais Historiques*, iii. 47-100). Le Grand d'Aussy has given prose versions or paraphrases of forty-three of Marie's Fables in his work entitled '*Fabliaux ou Centes*

\* He has also printed, in vol. iii. pp. 291-307, an account, communicated by Sir Walter Scott, of an early English translation of one of them, the '*Lai le Freisne,*' contained in the Auchinlech MS. in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.

du xii<sup>me</sup> et du xiii<sup>me</sup> Siècles, &c.' Marie is mentioned as his contemporary by Denis Pyram, or Pyramus, who was also probably a native of France, but lived at the court of Henry III., and was in his earlier years the author of many serventois, anacreontic songs, and other gay pieces, but whose only remaining compositions are two religious poems written in the sobriety and penitence of his old age: the first, on the life and martyrdom of St. Edmond, in 3286 verses; the second, in 714 verses, on the miracles of the same royal saint.\* Another *trouveur* of this date was no less a person than the famous Grosse-tête, Bishop of Lincoln, who was an Englishman, a native of Suffolk. He is the author of a religious romance of 1748 lines on the favourite subject of the Fall and Restoration of Man, which is sometimes called the 'Chastel d'Amour' (by which expression the Virgin Mary is meant), sometimes the 'Roman des Romans;' and there is also attributed to him another French poem of much greater length, which M. de la Rue thinks is the same that is preserved in one of the royal manuscripts at the British Museum (MS. Reg. 16 E. ix.), and is in that copy entitled 'Traité des Péchés et des Vertus,' although spoken of by other copyists as the 'Manual.' It consists of more than 7000 verses. The title by which Grosse-tête's second work is commonly mentioned is the 'Manuel des Péchés;' but the only known French poem bearing this title appears to be the work of a later writer, William of Wadington, who lived in the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century. It is a translation,

\* See De la Rue, *Essais Historiques*, iii. 101-106.

but with much additional matter, from a Latin poem entitled *Floretus*, which was printed both in folio at London, and in 4to. at Caen, in the same year, 1512.\* Wadington's 'Manuel,' which contains nearly 10,000 verses,† exists in several manuscripts; of which two in the Harleian collection have at the end a farewell address to the reader, explaining his object in undertaking the translation. It was, he says, with the view of making the beauties of the *Floretus* be felt by a people who ran eagerly after everything written in French verse, and that the work might be understood by great and small; which proves, observes the Abbé de la Rue, that the knowledge of the French language was then generally diffused in England. Wadington also asks his readers to pardon the faults he may have committed, whether in expression or in regard to the laws of rhyme, on the ground that being an Englishman by birth it was impossible that he should write French verse with perfect purity and correctness.

ROMANCE OF ALEXANDER.—THOMAS OF KENT.—HAVELOK LE DANOIS.—CHARDRY.—ADAM DE ROS.—HELIE OF WINCHESTER.—CONTINUATOR OF WACE.—PIERRE DU RIES.—GODFREY OF WATERFORD.—ROBERT BIKEZ.—PURGATORY OF ST. PATRICK.—WALTER OF EXETER.—PETER DE LANGTOFT.

A peculiar subject which engaged many of the French poets of the thirteenth century was the history of Alex-

\* De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 226. In a paper in the *Archæologia*, vol. xiii. pp. 230, &c. (read in 1798, published in 1800), this date is given 1520.

† De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 231. In the *Archæologia* (vol. xiii.) he says nearly 6000.

ander the Great; about a dozen *trouveurs* of France and England are enumerated who devoted themselves to this singular chapter of the romance of chivalry, and several of their performances still survive, although they can scarcely in any case be assigned with any certainty to their proper authors. One '*Roman d'Alexandre*' is attributed, at least in some copies, to a Thomas of Kent, who is placed by some authorities in the twelfth century;\* by others, about the beginning of the fourteenth;† and who, it has been suggested, may possibly be the author of the French romance of '*Le Roi Horn*,' and also the '*Thomas*' referred to by Robert de Brunne as the original narrator of the story of Sir Tristrem, which upon this supposition must have first appeared in Norman French.‡ Another celebrated early French romance is that of '*Havelok le Danois*'—founded on a well-known story of the Saxon era, relating to the town of Grimsby in Lincolnshire—which has been very ably edited for the Roxburgh Club by Sir Frederick Madden, along with a somewhat shorter relation of the same adventures which is found in Gaimar's continuation of Wace's Brut, and a much longer English poem on the same subject:§ M. de la Rue, however, seems to have shown

\* See M. Vanpraet, *Catalogue de la Vallière*, ii. 160.

† De la Rue, *Essais*, ii. 352.

‡ See '*Remarks on Sir W. Scott's Sir Tristrem*' (known to be by Sir Frederick Madden) in *Gent. Mag.* for October, 1833 (vol. ciii., part ii., p. 308); and also the Introduction to *Havelok* by the same gentleman, p. xlvii.

§ '*The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane*, accompanied by the French text; with an introduction, notes, and a glossary.' 4to. London, 1828. See also '*Examination of the "Remarks on the Glossary to the an-*



that the learned editor is mistaken in attributing to the separate 'Roman' (which extends to 1106 lines) the priority in point of time over the version given by Gaimar (containing 818 lines); and to have proved that it belongs not to the earlier part of the twelfth, but to the thirteenth century.\*

Other *trouveurs* of this period, connected with England either by birth, residence, or the subjects of their poetry, are, Chardry, supposed to have been born in Gloucestershire in the thirteenth century, the author of several religious romances,—one (of 2924 verses) on the lives of Saint Barlaam and St. Josaphat, another (of 1750 verses) on the legend of the Seven Sleepers, a third (of about 2000 verses) entitled 'Le Petit Plet,' being a dispute between an old and a young man on the happiness and misery of human life; † Adam de Ros, an English monk of the same age, from whom we have a poem on the legend of the descent of St. Paul to the infernal regions; ‡ Hélie of Winchester, the translator of the *Distichs of Cato*, for the use, as he says, of those of the English who, not understanding Latin, spoke only the Romance

cient Metrical Romance of Havelok the Dane, in a Letter to Francis Douce, Esq., F.A.S., by S. W. Singer," addressed to Henry Petrie, Esq., Keeper of his Majesty's Records in the Tower of London, by the Editor of Havelok.' 4to. Lond. 1829. The French Romance, with a translation or part of Sir Frederick Madden's Introduction, was republished, in crown 8vo., at Paris, in 1833, by M. Francisque Michel, with the title of 'Lai d'Havelok le Danois; treizième Siècle.' The publication is dedicated to the Abbé de la Rue, by "son admirateur et son ami."

\* *Essais Historiques*, iii. 114-120.

† See De la Rue *Essais* iii. 127-138.

‡ Id. 139-145.

(or French) ;\* the anonymous author of a continuation of Wace's Brut, in the common octosyllabic verse, in which he brings down the history in a fierce anti-Norman spirit, from the death of Cadwallader at the close of the seventh century to the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Henry III. (A.D. 1240), telling, among other things not elsewhere to be found, a remarkable story of a prophetic revelation made to the Conqueror touching the fates of his three sons ;† Pierre du Ries, a Norman, described as a writer of true poetical genius, who is the author of the romance of 'Anseis de Carthage,' one of the Paladins of Charlemagne, in 10,850 verses, of the 'Roman de Beuves de Hamton et de s'amie, Josiane, fille du Roi d'Armenie' (our English Bevis of Hampton), in 18,525 verses, and of a continuation of a romance on the subject of Judas Machabeus begun by Gautier de Belleperche ;‡ Godfrey of Waterford, an Irish Dominican monk, the author of a verse translation of the pretended Trojan History of Dares Phrygius, and also of several other versions of Latin works into French prose ;§ Robert Bikez, the writer, in the latter part of the thirteenth century, of the 'Lai du Corn,' founded on a very popular Arthurian fiction ;|| two anonymous writers of the same age, to each of whom we owe a short poem on the Purgatory of St. Patrick (one of about 1800, the other of about 760

\* See De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 150, 151 ; see also Tyrwhitt, *Essay*, note 55.

† See De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 157-169 ; also in *Archæologia*, xiii. 242-246.

‡ De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 170-179.

§ *Id.* p. 211.

|| See Tyrwhitt, *Discourse*, note 24 : Warton, *Hist.* ii. 432 ; and De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 216.

verses);\* Walter of Exeter, a Franciscan monk of Cornwall, to whom is attributed the romance of 'Guy de Warwick, et de Felice fille du Comte de Bukingham' (extending to nearly 11,500 verses); and Peter de Langtoft, a canon of the priory of St. Augustin at Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who has left us a translation of the British History of Geoffrey of Monmouth, a continuation of the English story in the same style, from the arrival of the Saxons to the reign of Edward I., a Life of that King, a translation of Herbert de Bosham's Latin Life of Becket, and one or two shorter pieces, all in French verse.†

## FRENCH PROSE ROMANCES.—FROISSART.

Down to the end of the twelfth century verse was probably the only form in which romances, meaning originally any compositions in the Romance or French language, then any narrative compositions whatever, were written; in the thirteenth, a few may have appeared in prose; but before the close of the fourteenth, prose had become the usual form in which such works were produced, and many of the old metrical romances had been recast in this new shape. The early French prose romances, however, do not, like their metrical predecessors, belong in any sense to the literature of this country; many of them were no doubt generally read for a time in

\* De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 245. Upon this subject see 'St. Patrick's Purgatory,' an Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise, current during the Middle Ages; by Thomas Wright, Esq., 8vo. Lond. 1844.

† Id. pp. 234-239.

England as well as in France, but we have no reason for believing that any of them were primarily addressed to the English public, or were written in England or by English subjects, and even during the brief space that they continued popular they seem to have been regarded as foreign importations. Their history, therefore, is no part of our present subject. But there is one remarkable product of the French literature of the fourteenth century which must be made an exception, the Chronicle of the inimitable Sire Jean Froissart. This work indeed has, in everything except the language in which it is written, nearly as much of an English as of a French interest. Froissart was a native of Valenciennes, where he appears to have been born about 1337 ; but the four books of his Chronicle, which relate principally to English affairs, though the narrative embraces also the course of events in France, Flanders, Scotland, and other countries, comprehend the space from 1326 to 1400, or the whole of the reigns of our Edward III. and Richard II. Froissart, however, is rather of authority as a painter of manners than as an historian of events ; for his passion for the marvellous and the decorative was so strong, that the simple fact, we fear, would have had little chance of acceptance with him in any case when it came into competition with a good story. In his own, and in the next age, accordingly, his history was generally reckoned and designated a romance. Caxton, in his 'Boke of the Ordre of Chevalrye or Knighthood,' classes it with the romances of Lancelot and Percival ; and indeed the 'Roman au Chroniques' seems to have been the title by which it was at first commonly known. On the other hand, however, it is fair to remember that a romance was

not in those days held to be necessarily a fiction. Froissart's Chronicle is certainly the truest and most lively picture that any writer has bequeathed to us of the spirit of a particular era; it shows "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." In a higher than the literal sense, the most apocryphal incidents of this most splendid and imaginative of gossips are full of truth; they cast more light upon the actual men and manners that are described, and bring back to life more of the long-buried past, than the most careful details of any other historian. The popularity of Froissart's Chronicle has thrown into the shade his other productions; but his highest fame in his own day was as a writer of poetry. His greatest poetical work appears to have been a romance entitled 'Meliador, or the Knight of the Sun of Gold;' and he also wrote many shorter pieces, chants royaux, ballads, rondeaux, and pastorals, in what was then called the New Poetry, which, indeed, he cultivated with so much success that he has by some been regarded as its inventor.\* On his introduction to Richard II., when he paid his last visit to England in 1396, he presented that monarch, as he tells us, with a book beautifully illuminated, engrossed with his own hand, bound in crimson velvet, and embellished with silver bosses, clasps, and golden roses, comprehending all the pieces of Amours

\* See Warton, *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, ii. 173, 300.—"It is a proof of the decay of invention among the French in the beginning of the fourteenth century, that about that period they began to translate into prose their old metrical romances. . . . At length, about the year 1380, in the place of the Provencial a new species of poetry succeeded in France, consisting of Chants Royaux, Balades, Rondeaux, and Pastorales. This was distinguished by the appellation of the New Poetry."

and Moralities which he had composed in the twenty-four preceding years. Richard, he adds, seemed much pleased, and examined the book in many places; for he was fond of reading as well as speaking French.

#### ASCENDANCY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

But for the last fifty years of the fourteenth century the French language had been rapidly losing the ascendancy it had held among us from the middle of the tenth, and becoming among all classes in England a foreign tongue. We have already produced the testimonies of Higden writing immediately before the commencement of this change, and of Trevisa after it had been going on for about a quarter of a century; to these may now be added what Chaucer writes, probably within ten years after the date (1383) which Trevisa expressly notes as that of his statement. In the Prologue to his 'Testament of Love,' a prose work, which seems to have been far advanced, if not finished, in 1392,\* the great father of our English poetry, speaking of those of his countrymen who still persisted in writing French verse, expresses himself thus:—"Certes there ben some that speke thyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenche men have as good a fantasye as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe." And afterwards he adds, "Let then clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertye in science and the knowinge in that facultye, and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly [natural] to theyr mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasyes in suche

\* See Tyrwhitt's Account of the Works of Chaucer, prefixed to his Glossary.

wordes as we learneden of our dames tonge." French, it is evident from this, although it might still be a common acquirement among the higher classes, had ceased to be the mother tongue of any class of Englishmen, and was only known to those to whom it was taught by a master. So, it will be remembered the Prioress in the *Canterbury Tales*, although she could speak French "ful fayre and fetisly," or fluently, spoke it only

"After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
For Frenche of Paris was to hire [her] unknowe."\*

From this, as from many other passages in old writers, we learn that the French taught and spoken in England had, as was indeed inevitable, become a corrupt dialect of the language, or at least very different from the French of Paris. But, as the foreign tongue lost its hold and declined in purity, the old Teutonic speech of the native population, favoured by the same circumstances and course of events which checked and depressed its

\* It is impossible to believe with Sir Harris Nicholas, in his otherwise very clear and judicious *Life of Chaucer* (8vo. Lond.) 1843; additional note, p. 142), that Chaucer perhaps here meant to intimate that the prioress could not speak French at all, on the ground that the expression "French of Stratford-at-Bow" is used in a tract published in 1586 (Ferne's *Blazon of Gentry*), to describe the language of English heraldry. In the first place the phrase is not there "a colloquial paraphrase for *English*," but for the mixed French and English, or, as it might be regarded, Anglicized or corrupted French, of our heralds. But, at any rate, can it be supposed for a moment that Chaucer would take so round-about and fantastic a way as this of telling his readers so simple a fact, as that his prioress could speak her native language? He would never have spent three words upon such a matter, much less three lines.

rival, and having at last, after going through a process almost of dissolution and putrefaction, begun to assume a new organization, gradually recovered its ascendancy. It has been commonly stated, or taken for granted, that it was the influx of the French language after the Norman Conquest which principally or exclusively revolutionized the Saxon, and destroyed its primitive character. The forms of the Saxon tongue, indeed, were completely changed in the space of between two and three centuries during which it was passing into what we now call English; "but that these mutations," says a late able and learned writer, "were a consequence of the Norman invasion, or were even accelerated by that event, is wholly incapable of proof; and nothing is supported upon a firmer principle of rational induction, than that the same effects would have ensued if William and his followers had remained in their native soil. The substance of the change is admitted on all hands to consist in the suppression of those grammatical intricacies occasioned by the inflection of nouns, the seemingly arbitrary distinctions of gender, the government of prepositions, &c. How far this may be considered as the result of an innate law of the language, or some general law in the organization of those who spoke it, we may leave for the present undecided; but that it was in no way dependent upon external circumstances, upon foreign influence or political disturbances, is established by this undeniable fact—that every branch of the Low German stock, from whence the Anglo-Saxon sprang, displays the same simplification of its grammar. In all these languages there has been a constant tendency to relieve themselves of that precision which chooses a fresh symbol for every



shade of meaning, to lessen the amount of nice distinctions, and detect, as it were, a royal road to the interchange of opinion." \*

The change here described may be considered as having been the first step in the passage of the Anglo-Saxon into the modern English ; the next was the change made in the vocabulary of the language by the introduction of numerous terms borrowed from the French. Of this latter innovation, however, we find little trace till long after the completion of the former. For nearly two centuries after the Conquest the Saxon, or English, seems to have been spoken and written (to the small extent to which it was written) with scarcely any intermixture of Norman. It only, in fact, began to receive such intermixture after it came to be adopted as the speech of that part of the nation which had previously spoken French. And this adoption was plainly the cause of the intermixture. So long as it remained the language only of those who had been accustomed to speak it from their infancy, and who had never known any other, it might have gradually undergone some change in its internal organization, but it could scarcely acquire any additions from a foreign source. What should have tempted the Saxon peasant to substitute a Norman term, upon any occasion, for the word of the same meaning with which the language of his ancestors supplied him ? As for things and occasions for which new names were necessary, they must have come comparatively little in his way ; and, when they did, the capabilities of his native tongue were sufficient to furnish him with appropriate forms of expression from its own resources. The corruption of the

\* Preface, by Price, to Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poetry, p. 110.

Saxon by the intermixture of French vocables must have proceeded from those whose original language was French, and who were in habits of constant intercourse with French customs, French literature, and everything else that was French, at the same time that they spoke Saxon. And this supposition is in perfect accordance with the historical fact. So long as the English was the language of only a part of the nation, and the French, as it were, struggled with it for mastery, it remained unadulterated ;—when it became the speech of the whole people, of the higher classes as well as of the lower, then it lost its old Teutonic purity, and received a large alien admixture from the alien lips through which it passed. Whether this was a fortunate circumstance, or the reverse, is another question. As has just been intimated, however, the Saxon in passing into English had already lost some of the chief of its original characteristics, and, if left to its own spontaneous and unassisted development, it would probably have assumed a character resembling rather that of the Dutch or the Flemish than that of the German of the present day.

#### EARLY ENGLISH REMAINS.

The chief remains that we have of Saxon and English poetry for the first two centuries after the Conquest have been enumerated by Sir Frederick Madden in a comprehensive paragraph of his valuable Introduction to the romance of 'Havelok,' which we will take leave to transcribe :—"The notices by which we are enabled to trace the rise of our Saxon poetry from the Saxon period to the end of the twelfth century are few and scanty. We may indeed comprise them all in the Song of Canute re-

corded by the monk of Ely [Hist. Elyens. p. 505 apud Gale], who wrote about 1166; the words put into the mouth of Aldred Archbishop of York, who died in 1069 [W. Malmesb. de Gest. Pontif. l. i. p. 271]; the verses ascribed to St. Godric, the hermit of Finchale, who died in 1170 [Rits. Bibliogr. Poet.]; the few lines preserved by Lambarde and Camden attributed to the same period [Rits. Anc. Songs, Diss. p. xxviii]; and the prophecy said to have been set up at Here in the year 1189, as recorded by Benedict Abbas, Roger Hoveden, and the Chronicle of Lanercost [Rits. Metr. Rom. Diss. p. lxxiii]. To the same reign of Henry II. are to be assigned the metrical compositions of Layamon [MS. Cott. Cal. A. ix., and Otho C. xiii.] and Orm [MS. Jun. 1], and also the legends of St. Katherine, St. Margaret, and St. Julian [MS. Bodl. 34], with some few others, from which we may learn with tolerable accuracy the state of the language at that time, and its gradual formation from the Saxon to the shape it subsequently assumed. From this period to the middle of the next century nothing occurs to which we can affix any certain date; but we shall probably not err in ascribing to that interval the poems ascribed to John de Guldevorde [MSS. Cott. Cal. A. ix., Jes. Coll. Oxon. 29], the Biblical History [MS. Bennet Cant. R. 11] and Poetical Paraphrase of the Psalms [MSS. Cott. Vesp. D. vii., Coll. Benn. Cant. O. 6, Bodl. 921] quoted by Warton, and the Moral Ode published by Hickes [MSS. Digby 4, Jes. Coll. Oxon. 29]. Between the years 1244 and 1258, we know, was written the versification of part of a meditation of St. Augustine, as proved by the age of the prior who gave the MS. to the Durham library [MS. Eccl. Dun. A. iii.

12, and Bodl. 42]. Soon after this time also were composed the earlier Songs in Ritson and Percy (1264), with a few more pieces which it is unnecessary to particularize. This will bring us to the close of Henry III.'s reign and beginning of his successor's, the period assigned by our poetical antiquaries to the romances of Sir Tristrem, Kyng Horn, and Kyng Alesaunder."\*

#### ORIGIN OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

As has been already stated, almost the only Saxon prose we have of a date subsequent to the Conquest is the concluding portion of the Saxon Chronicle, which extends to the end of the reign of Stephen. And we have nothing more in prose to which is given the name either of Saxon or English till we get to the middle of the fourteenth century. But was our modern English, after all, really in its origin the successor of the Anglo-Saxon, the mere new form into which the latter gradually passed or degenerated? If we may trust to the genuineness of some of the earliest specimens that have just been referred to, a suspicion will arise that the English as distinguished from the Saxon is of earlier birth than is commonly supposed, that the one language is not the metamorphosis of the other, but only its daughter, and that, like mother and daughter in other cases, the two for a time existed together. The same thing seems to have taken place as in France and other continental countries when the Latin or proper Roman first became corrupted into the *Romana Rustica*; the

\* The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane; Introduction, p. xlix. We have transferred the references, inclosed in brackets, from the bottom of the page to the text.

former long continued to be the language of writing, and probably even of the educated classes in oral communication, while the latter was the popular speech, from which it gradually rose to be the dialect first of popular, then of all literature. So in this country there was probably in use a sort of English, or broken Saxon, even in the Saxon times; and the two forms of the language, the regular and the irregular, the learned and the vulgar, the old and the new, the mother and the daughter, seem to have maintained a rivalry for perhaps a century or two, till the rude vigour, the rough and ready character, of the one prevailed, in a time of much ignorance and general convulsion and change, over the refinement and comparative difficulty of the other. The completion of this revolution may be dated about the middle of the twelfth century; it is commonly stated that then the Anglo-Saxon passed away and the English took its place; and it is true that after that time we have no more Anglo-Saxon. But it can hardly be affirmed that we had no English long before.

SONG OF CANUTE.—ST. GODRIC.—OTHER EARLY VARIANTS IN ENGLISH.

The verse that has been preserved of the song composed by Canute as he was one day rowing on the Nen, while the holy music came floating on the air and along the water from the choir of the neighbouring minster of Ely—a song which we are told by the historian continued to his day, after the lapse of a century and a half, to be a universal popular favourite\*—is very nearly such

\* Quæ usque hodie in choris publice cantantur, et in proverbiiis memorantur.

English as was written in the fourteenth century. This interesting fragment properly falls to be given as the first of our specimens:—

Merie sunge the muneches binnen Ely  
 Tha Cnut Ching rew there by:  
 Roweth, cnihtes, noer the land,  
 And here we thes muneches saeng.

That is, literally,—

Merrily (sweetly) sung the monks within Ely  
 (When) that Cnute King rowed thereby:  
 Row, knights, near the land,  
 And hear we these monks' song.

Being in verse and in rhyme, it is probable that the words are reported in their original form; they cannot, at any rate, be much altered.

The not very clerical address of Archbishop Aldred to Ursus Earl of Worcester, who refused to take down one of his castles the ditch of which encroached upon a monastic churchyard, consists, as reported by William of Malmesbury (who by the bye praises its elegance) of only two short lines:—

Hatest thou\* Urse?  
 Have thou God's curse;

but they are also very good English, as distinguished from Anglo-Saxon.

The hymn of St. Godric, again, has more of a Saxon character. It is thus given by Ritson, who professes to have collated the Royal MS. 5 F. vii., and the Harleian MS. 322, and refers also to *Mat. Parisiensis His-*

\* That is, hightest thou (art thou called) — Malmesbury's Latin translation is, "Vocaris Ursus: habes Dei maledictionem." But the first line seems to be interrogative.

*toria*, pp. 119, 120, edit. 1640, and to (MS. Cott.) Nero D. v. :—

Sainte Marie [clane] virgine,  
 Moder Jhesu Cristes Nazarene,  
 On fo [*or foug*], schild, help theiir Godrie,  
 On fang bring hegilich with the in Godes riche.  
 Sainte Marie, Christe's bur,  
 Maidens clenhad, moderes flur,  
 Dilie min sinne [*or sennen*], rix in min mod,  
 Bring me to winne with the selfd God.

“By the assistance of the Latin versions,” adds Ritson, “one is enabled to give it literally in English, as follows :—Saint Mary [chaste] virgin, mother of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, take, shield, help thy Godric; take, bring him quickly with thee into God's kingdom. Saint Mary, Christ's chamber, purity of a maiden, flower of a mother, destroy my sin, reign in my mind, bring me to dwell with the only God.”

Two other short compositions of the same poetical eremite are much in the same style. One is a couplet said to have been sung to him by the spirit or ghost of his sister, who appeared to him after her death and thus assured him of her happiness :—

Crist and Sainte Marie swa on scamel me iledde  
 That ic on this erde ne silde with mine bare fote itredde.

Which Ritson translates :—“Christ and Mary, thus supported, have me brought, that I on earth should not with my bare foot tread.”

The other is a hymn to St. Nicholas :—

Sainte Nicholaes, Godes druth,  
 Tymbre us faire scone hus.  
 At thi burth, at thi bare,  
 Sainte Nicholaes, bring us wel there.

“That is,” says Ritson, “Saint Nicholas, God’s lover, build us a fair beautiful house. At thy birth, at thy bier, Saint Nicholas, bring us safely thither.”

As for the rhymes given by Lambarde and Camden as of the twelfth century, they can hardly in the shape in which we have them be of any thing like that antiquity: they are, in fact, in the common English of the sixteenth century. Lambarde (in his Dictionary of England, p. 36) tells us that a rabble of Flemings and Normans brought over in 1173 by Robert Earl of Leicester, when they were assembled on a heath near St. Edmonds Bury, “fell to dance and sing,

Hoppe Wylikin, hoppe Wyllykin,  
Ingland is thyne and myne, &c.”

Camden’s story is that Hugh Bigott, Earl of Norfolk, in the reign of Stephen used to boast of the impregnable strength of his castle of Bungey after this fashion:—

“Were I in my castle of Bungey,  
Upon the river of Waveney,  
I would ne care for the king of Cockeney.”

#### THE HERE PROPHECY.

What Sir Frederick Madden describes as “the prophecy said to have been set up at Here in the year 1189” is given by Ritson as follows:—

Whan thu sees in Here hert yneret,  
Than sulen Engles in three be ydelet:  
That an into Yrland al to late waie,  
That other into Puille mid prude bileve,  
The thridde into Airhahen herd all wreken drechegen.

\* The passages are quoted by Ritson at pp. xl. and xli. of the 1st vol. of the 2nd and much enlarged edition of his *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, 2 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1829.



These lines, which he calls a "specimen of English poetry, apparently of the same age" (the latter part of the 12th century), Ritson says are preserved by Benedictus Abbas, by Hoveden, and by the Chronicle of Lanercost; and he professes to give them, and the account by which they are introduced, from "the former," by which he means the first of the three. But in truth the verses do not occur as he has printed them in any of the places to which he refers. Benedictus Abbas (p. 622) has two versions of them, the second of which he introduces by the word "rectius" (more correctly); there is a third in the printed Hoveden; what Ritson has mistaken for the Lanercost Chronicle is an imperfect manuscript of Hoveden (Cotton MS. Claud. D. vii. fol. 101) in which they occur very nearly as printed in his Hoveden by Savile—the only difference of any importance being, that the MS. has in the fourth line "bi leue," whereas Savile (both in the London edition 1596, fol. 386 r<sup>o</sup>, and in the Francfort edition 1601, p. 678) has "bi seue." Ritson's transcript is evidently taken either from the manuscript or the printed Hoveden; it is quite unlike either of the versions given by Benedictus. But it is a very inaccurate transcript: to pass over minor variations, all the four originals, for instance, have "sal" or "sale" before "into Yrland" in the third line; and the last line stands nowhere as Ritson has given it:—in the first copy in Benedictus it is, "The thirde in hayre haughen hert alle ydreghe;" in the second it is, "The thride in hire athen hert alle wreke y-dreghe;" in the MS. Hoveden it is "The thridde into airhahen herd alle Wrek y drehegen" (or perhaps "drehegea"); in the printed Hoveden it is, "The thridde into Airhahen

herd all wreke y drechehen." The line, in any of the four forms in which we have it, appears to be entirely unintelligible; and indeed the verses are manifestly corrupt throughout, although a sort of sense may be made out of most of the others. "Puille" is Apulia; and the "wreke" in the last line may have something to do with a law about *wrecks* which both Benedict and Hoveden immediately go on to state that Richard proclaimed at this time, A.D. 1190, after his successful military operations against King Tancred in Sicily and Calabria (or Apulia); but what is "Airhahen?" or where, can any one tell, is the town of "Here," of which Ritson and others who quote or refer to the verses speak so familiarly? Over this name the second version in Benedict has the word "Host" printed, with a point of interrogation, as if intended for a gloss. But the most remarkable circumstance of all is, that there is no ground at all for supposing, as is done by Ritson and Sir Frederick Madden, that the verses were ever inscribed or set up upon any house at "Here" or elsewhere. What is said both by Benedict and Hoveden (who employ nearly the same words) is simply that the figure of a hart was set up upon the pinnacle of the house, in order, as was believed, that the prophecy contained in the verses might be accomplished—which prophecy, we are told immediately before, had been found engraven in ancient characters upon stone tables in the neighbourhood of the place. It is clearly intended to be stated that the prophecy was much older than the building of the house, and the erection of the figure of the stag, in the year 1190. This is sufficiently conveyed in Ritson's own translation. What he means, therefore, by saying, "As

the inscription was set up when the house was built, before the death of Henry the Second, in 1189," is not obvious. Benedict says that the house was built by Ranulfus, or Ralph (not "Randal," as Ritson translates it) Fitzstephen (Ranulfo, filio Stephani); Hoveden, by William; which latter Ritson, we do not know upon what authority, intimates is the correct name. Both chroniclers state that the place, which was a royal town (*villam regis Angliæ*), had been given to Fitzstephen by King Henry, that is, probably, Henry II., as Ritson assumes; but this, we repeat, determines nothing as to the age of the verses, which were, or were supposed to be, of much earlier date than either the erection of the house or the grant of the property. They seem, indeed, as far as can be judged from the corrupt state in which they have come down to us, to be rather Saxon than English.

The metrical translation of Wace's Brut by Layamon, Lazamon, or Lajamon, and the Scriptural paraphrase of Orm, have been already noticed; they also may both be considered as Saxon, although exhibiting that language in a very corrupt and dilapidated state.

METRICAL LEGENDS.—LAND OF COKAYNE.—GULDEVORD.  
—WILLE GRIS.—EARLY ENGLISH SONGS.

With regard again to the metrical Saints' legends, and the other pieces which have been assigned by Hickes and Warton to the twelfth century, it is in the highest degree probable, as already remarked, that no one of them belongs to an earlier period than the latter part of the thirteenth, and that some of them are not even of that antiquity. It is impossible, for instance, to believe that the celebrated satirical poem on the "Land of

Cokayne," which Warton says "was evidently written soon after the Conquest, at least before the reign of Henry the Second," can, in the form in which we have it, be older than the year 1300. It is very possibly not so ancient by a hundred years.

This poem, which he takes to be a translation (we suppose, from the French),\* is reprinted entire by Ellis (*Specimens of Early English Poets*, 4th edit. vol. i. pp. 83—95); and abundant samples of the other fugitive and anonymous poetry which has been attributed to the same age, but the true date of which is in many cases equally doubtful, may be found in Hickes and in Warton. The latter gives a few lines of one of the poems of John de Guldevord; which he affirms to be "not later than Richard the First." The manuscript in which it is preserved, belonging to Jesus College, Oxford, he describes in a note as "perhaps written in the reign of Henry the Sixth." Ritson, however, who has given a further account of Guldevord in his '*Bibliotheca Poetica*' (pp. 5, 6), asserts that a manuscript in the Cotton collection (Cal. A. ix.) containing some of his poetry is of the thirteenth century. The Biblical History, extracted from the Books of Genesis and Exodus, and the translation of the Psalms, from which Warton has given extracts, are probably at least as old as the verses attributed to Guldevord; Warton refers both to the reign of Henry the Second or Richard the First.

\* "A French fabliau, bearing a near resemblance to this poem, and possibly the production upon which the English minstrel founded his song, has been published in the new edition of Barbazan's *Fabliaux et Conies*, Paris, 1808, vol. iv. p. 175." *Note by Price to Warton, Hist. Eng. Poet.* i. 12.

As we have had occasion to show that there is no authority in the Lanercost Chronicle for one specimen of early verse cited thence by Ritson, we may here insert a couplet therein given under the year 1244, which we believe has not been hitherto noticed. A Norfolk peasant boy, named William, had left his father's house and set out to seek his fortune, with no companion or other possession but a little pig (*porcellus*), whence the people used to call him *Willy Grice*; but having in his wanderings in France met with a rich widow, whom he wooed and wed, he became in the end a great man in that country: still he piously remembered his early life of poverty and vagrancy, and, among the other ornaments of one of the apartments of his fine house, to which he used to retire every day for an hour's meditation and self-communion, he had himself pictured, leading the pig as he used to do with a string, with this superscription in his native tongue:—

Wille Gris, Wille Gris!

Thinche twat you was, and qwat you es

Some of our earliest songs that have been preserved undoubtedly belong to about the middle of the thirteenth century. The well-known lines beginning "Sumer is i-cumen in," first printed by Sir John Hawkins in his 'History of Music' (ii. 93), being the oldest English song that has been found with the musical notes annexed, are probably of this antiquity; and so may some of the other pieces which Warton has quoted from another of the Harleian MSS. (2253). But the compositions of this kind of most certain date are some referring to the public events of the day, and evidently written at the time; such as the ballad about the battle of Lewes (fought in

1264), and others in Percy's *Reliques*, in Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, and in the collection lately printed by the Camden Society, entitled 'The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to that of Edward II., edited and translated by Thomas Wright, Esq.,' 4to., Lond. 1839.

#### EARLY ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCES.

From the thirteenth century also we are probably to date the origin or earliest composition of English metrical romances; at least, none have descended to the present day which seem to have a claim to any higher antiquity. There is no absolutely conclusive evidence that all our old metrical romances are translations from the French; the French original cannot in every case be produced; but it is at least extremely doubtful if any such work was ever composed in English except upon the foundation of a similar French work. It is no objection that the subjects of most of these poems are not French or continental, but British—that the stories of some of them are purely English or Saxon; this, as has been shown, was the case with the early northern French poetry generally, from whatever cause, whether simply in consequence of the connexion of Normandy with this country from the time of the Conquest, or partly from the earlier intercourse of the Normans with their neighbours the people of Armorica, or Bretagne, whose legends and traditions, which were common to them with their kindred the Welsh, have unquestionably served as the fountain-head to the most copious of all the streams of romantic fiction. French, as we have seen, was the only language of popular literature in England for some ages after the Conquest; if

even a Saxon legend, therefore, was to be turned into a romance, it was in French that the poem would at that period be written. It is possible, indeed, that some legends might have escaped the French *trouveurs*, to be discovered and taken up at a later date by the English minstrels; but this is not likely to have happened with any that were at all popular or generally known; and of this description, it is believed, are all those, without any exception, upon which our existing early English metrical romances are founded. The subjects of these compositions — *Tristrem*, *King Horn*, *Havelok*, &c. — could hardly have been missed by the French poets in the long period during which they had the whole field to themselves: we have the most conclusive evidence with regard to some of the legends in question that they were well known at an early date to the writers in that language — the story of *Havelok*, for instance, is in *Gaimar's Chronicle*: upon this general consideration alone, therefore, which is at least not contradicted by either the internal or historical evidence in any particular case, it seems reasonable to infer that, where we have both an English and a French metrical romance upon the same subject, the French is the earlier of the two, and the original of the other. From this it is, in the circumstances, scarcely a step to the conclusion come to by *Tyrwhitt*, who has intimated his belief "that we have no English romance prior to the age of *Chaucer* which is not a translation or imitation of some earlier French romance." \* Certainly, if this judgment has not been absolutely demonstrated, it has not been refuted by the more extended investigation the question has since received.

\* *Essay on Language of Chaucer*, note 55.

PUBLICATIONS OF PERCY — WARTON — TYRWHITT — PINKERTON — HERBERT — RITSON — ELLIS — SCOTT — WEBER — UTTERSON — LAING — HARTSHORNE — THE ROXBURGH CLUB — THE BANNATYNE — THE MAITLAND — THE ABBOTSFORD — THE CAMDEN SOCIETY.

The first account, in any detail, of our early English metrical romances was given by Percy, in the third volume of his 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,' first published in 1765. In this Essay, of twenty-four pages (extended to thirty-eight in the fourth edition of the work, 1794), he gave a list of thirty of these poems, to which, in subsequent editions, he added nine more. Then came the first volume of Warton's 'History of English Poetry,' in 1774, with a much more discursive examination at least of parts of the subject, and ample specimens of several romances. Tyrwhitt's edition of the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer followed the next year, with many valuable notices on this as well as other matters belonging to our early literature in the admirable preliminary Essay on the Language and Versification of his author, which is in fact a history of the language down to the end of the fourteenth century. In 1792 Pinkerton inserted the Scotch metrical romance of 'Gawan and Galogras,' from an Edinburgh edition of 1508, in his collection of 'Scotish Poems, reprinted from scarce editions,' 3 vols. 8vo., Lond.; and he also gave in his last volume, as one of "three pieces before unpublished," that of 'Sir Gawan and Sir Galaron of Galloway;' which was copied into Sibbald's 'Chronicle of Scottish Poetry' (i., pp. xv. &c.), 4 vols. 8vo., Edinb. 1802. In 1798 appeared 'Roberte the Deuyll, a metrical Romance, from an ancient illuminated MS.'



(8vo., Lond.), 'printed for I. Herbert;' whose name is also at the end of a short prefatory advertisement, in which it is stated that the MS. agreed, word for word, with a remaining fragment of an edition of the poem which appears to have been printed early in the sixteenth century by Wynken de Worde, or Pynson. The volume has a number of engravings, which are very curious, and seem to be fac-similes of the illuminations in the MS. In 1802 Ritson published at London his 3 vols. 8vo. of 'Ancient Engleish Metrical Romanceés,' containing, besides his 'Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy,' which fills 220 pages of the first volume, the romances, in their entire length, of 'Ywayne and Gawin' (4032 lines); of 'Launfal,' or 'Launfal Miles,' a translation from the French of Marie by Thomas Chestre in the reign of Henry VI. (1044 lines); of 'Lybeaus Disconus,' that is, *Le Beau Desconnu*, or *The Fair Unknown*, sometimes called *Lybius Disconius* (2130 lines); of 'The Geste of Kyng Horn' (1546 lines); of 'The Kyng of Tars and the Soudan of Dammas' (1148 lines); of 'Emare' (1035 lines); of 'Sir Orphéo' (510 lines); of 'The Chronicle of Engleland' (1036 lines); of 'Le Bone Florence of Rome' (2189 lines); of 'The Erle of Tolous' (1218 lines); of 'The Squyr of Lowe Degre' (1132 lines); and of 'The Knight of Curtesy and the Fair Lady of Fagnell' (500 lines): together with 133 pages of Notes, including the imperfect romance of 'Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild' (about 1150 lines), from the Auchinleck MS. in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh: the whole being followed by a Glossary, filling about 80 pages; in commendation of which, however, very little can be said. With the exception of

‘The Squyr of Lowe Degre,’ and ‘The Knight of Curtesy,’ which are from rare black-letter copies of the sixteenth century, all the pieces in this collection of Ritson’s are transcribed from manuscripts, most of them unique. A more successful attempt, however, to diffuse a knowledge of this portion of our ancient poetical literature was made by Mr. George Ellis, in his ‘Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances,’ 3 vols. 8vo., first published in 1805. Besides an ‘Historical Introduction on the Rise and Progress of Romantic Composition in France and England’—followed by an Analysis (by Mr. Douce) of the MS. work of Petrus Alphonsus, entitled ‘De Clericali Disciplina,’ and an account, amounting almost to a complete translation, of the twelve Lays of Marie of France—this work, of which a second edition appeared in 1811, contained extended analytical reviews of the romances of Merlin, Morte Arthur, Guy of Warwick, Sir Bevis of Hamptoun, Richard Cœur de Lion, Roland and Ferragus, Sir Otuel, Sir Ferumbras, The History of the Seven Wise Masters, Florence and Blauncheflour, Robert of Cysille, Sir Isumbras, Sir Triamour, The Life of Ipomydon, Sir Eglamour of Artois, Lai le Fraine, Sir Eger, Sir Grahame, and Sir Graysteel, Sir Degore, Roswal and Lillian, and Amys and Amylion. Most of these romances may be considered of later date than those published by Ritson: Mr. Ellis, indeed, on his title-page describes them as “chiefly written during the early part of the fourteenth century.” Meanwhile, in 1804, Walter Scott had published at Edinburgh, in royal 8vo., the romance of ‘Tristrem,’ from the Auchinleck MS., describing it on his title-page as a work of the thirteenth century, written in Scotland, by Thomas of Ercildoune,

popularly called *The Rhymer*, and maintaining that theory in an elaborate and ingenious Introduction and a large body of curious illustrative annotation. One of the Appendices to this volume, which has been several times reprinted, contained an account of the contents of the Auchinleck MS., consisting of forty-four pieces in all of ancient poetry, complete or imperfect. Scott, it may be remarked, here acknowledges that there can be little doubt of the volume, which consists of 334 leaves of parchment, the writing being in double columns, in a nearly uniform hand of the earlier part of the fourteenth century, having been compiled in England; and many circumstances, he says, lead him to conclude that the MS. has been written in an Anglo-Norman convent. In 1810, Scott's friend, Mr. Henry Weber, brought out at Edinburgh, in 3 vols. 8vo., his collection entitled '*Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries, published from Ancient MSS.; with an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary.*' This work contains the romances of '*King Alisaunder*' (8034 lines), '*Sir Cleges*' (540 lines), '*Lay le Freine*' (402 lines), '*Richard Cocr de Lion*' (7136 lines), '*The Lyfe of Ipolydon*' (2346 lines), '*Amis and Amiloun*' (2495 lines), '*The Proces of the Seuyne Sages*' (4002 lines), '*Octouian Imperator*' (1962 lines), '*Sir Amadas*' (778 lines), and '*The Hunttyng of the Hare*' (270 lines). The next collection that appeared was that of Mr. Edward Vernon Utterson, entitled '*Select Pieces of Early Popular Poetry; republished principally from early printed copies in the Black Letter:*' 2 vols. 8vo., Lond. 1817. It contained the metrical romances or tales of '*Syr Tryamour*' (1593 lines), '*Syr Isenbras*' (855 lines), '*Syr Degore*' (993

lines), 'Syr Gowghter' (685 lines); besides a number of other pieces (occupying the second volume) which cannot be included under that denomination. Next followed Mr. David Laing's three collections:—the first entitled 'Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland,' 4to., Edinb. 1822; containing twenty-five pieces in all, among which are 'The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn,' being another copy, from a MS. of the fifteenth century in the library of Lincoln cathedral, of Pinkerton's 'Sir Gawan and Sir Galaron of Galloway;' and the tale of 'Orfeo and Heurodis' (that is, Orpheus and Eurydice), from the Auchinleck MS., being another and very different version of Ritson's 'Sir Orpheo:' the second, entitled 'Early Metrical Tales,' 8vo., Edinb. 1826; containing 'The History of Sir Eger, Sir Grahame, and Sir Graysteel' (2860 lines), 'The History of Roswall and Lillian' (876 lines) (which the same editor had printed separately in 1822), together with other poems and shorter pieces, all from earlier printed copies: the third, entitled 'The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane, and other Ancient Poems,' black letter, 4to., 1827; being a reprint of an unique volume in the Advocates' Library, printed by W. Chapman and A. Myllar, in 1508, and containing eleven pieces in all, among which, besides 'Golagrus and Gawane,' are 'The Tale of Orpheus and Eurydice' (another version, attributed to Robert Henryson, a Scottish poet of the fifteenth century), and 'Sir Eglamour of Artoys,' which is analyzed in Ellis. This last-mentioned volume is extremely scarce, only seventy-four copies, most of them more or less damaged, having been saved from a fire at the printer's. The unique volume of which it is a reprint, and which is in a

very decayed state, was presented to the Advocates' Library by a medical gentleman of Edinburgh, about 1788, and is understood to have been picked up somewhere in Ayrshire. One of the pieces, 'The Porteus of Noblenes,' the last in the collection, is in prose. Then came the Rev. Charles Henry Hartshorne's 'Ancient Metrical Tales, printed chiefly from Original Sources,' 8vo., Lond. 1829; containing, besides several pieces in other kinds of poetry, 'The Romance of King Athelstone,' 'Florice and Blanchefour' (apparently from the Auchinleck MS.), and a portion of the alliterative romance of 'Willyam and the Werwolf.' There have also been printed, by the Roxburgh Club, 'Le Morte Arthure; the Adventures of Sir Launcelot du Lake,' 4to., Lond. 1819, from the Harleian MS. 2252, being one of those analyzed by Ellis; 'Chevelere Assigne'—that is, the *Chevalier au Cygne*, or Knight of the Swan—from the Cotton MS., Cal. A. 2, being a translation of a portion of a French romance, which is also preserved (with a short Introduction and Glossary by Mr. Utterson), 4to., Lond. 1820; 'The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane, accompanied by the French text, with an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary, by Frederick Madden, Esq.' (now Sir F. Madden), 4to., Lond. 1828; and 'The Ancient English Romance of William and the Werwolf, edited, with an Introduction and Glossary, by Sir Frederick Madden,' 4to., Lond. 1832: by the Bannatyne Club, 'The Buik of Alexander the Great, reprinted from the Metrical Romance printed at Edinburgh, by Arbuthnot, about the year 1580,' 4to., Edinb. 1834; 'The Seven Sages, in Scotch metre, by John Rolland of Dalkeith, reprinted from the edition of 1578,'

4to., Edinb. 1837; 'The Scottish Metrical Romance of Lancelot du Lak, from a MS. of the Fifteenth Century,' (edited by Joseph Stevenson, Esq.), 4to., Edinb. 1839; and 'Syr Gawayne, a Collection of Ancient Romance Poems, by Scottish and English Authors, relating to that celebrated Knight of the Round Table, with an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary, by Sir Frederick Madden' (including 'Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyght,' 'The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne,' 'The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane,' and an Appendix of shorter pieces), 4to., Lond. 1839: by the Maitland Club, 'Sir Beves of Hamtoun, a Metrical Romance, now first edited from the Auchinleck MS.' (by W. B. D. D. Turnbull, Esq.), 4to., Edinb. 1838: by the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs in conjunction, 'Clariodus, a Metrical Romance, from a MS. of the sixteenth century' (edited by Edward Piper, Esq.), 4to., Edinb. 1830: by the Abbotsford Club, 'The Romances of Rowland and Vernagu, and Otuel, from the Auchinleck MS.' (edited by A. Nicholson, Esq.), 4to., 1836; and 'Arthour and Merlin, a Metrical Romance, from the Auchinleck MS.' (edited by Mr. Turnbull), 4to., 1838: and by the Camden Society, 'Three Early English Metrical Romances, with an Introduction and Glossary, edited by John Robson, Esq.,' 4to., Lond. 1842; the three Romances (which are edited from a MS. of the fifteenth century, called the Ireland MS. from its former possessor of that name) being 'The Anturs of Arther at the Tarnewathelan' (other versions of which, as already noticed, have been printed by Pinkerton, Laing, and Madden\*); 'Sir Amadace' (a different version of

\* Mr. Robson (who is rather sparing of distinct references)

which is in Weber's Collection); and 'The Avowyng of King Arther, Sir Gawan, Sir Kaye, and Sir Baw-

says (Introduction, p. xii.) that this romance was first printed by Pinkerton in his SCOTTISH BALLADS; remarking again (p. xvi.) that "Pinkerton published it as a Scottish ballad." The collection, in fact, in which Pinkerton published it, as mentioned above, was entitled 'Scotish Poems,' 1792. The curious notice of this proceeding by Ritson, to which Mr. Robson refers, occurs in his 'Ancient English Metrical Romances,' vol. iii. p. 230, in a note on 'Ywayne and Gawin,' where he says, "Two other romances on the same subject, but in a dialect and metre peculiar to Scotland, are printed in Pinkerton's *Scotish Poems*; the one from an edition at Edinburgh in 1508, the other from a MS., the property of the present editor, which the said Pinkerton came by very dishonestly." It appears from a letter of Ritson's, dated December 26, 1792, published in the Gentleman's Magazine for January, 1793 (vol. lxi. p. 32), that he was then in possession of the MS., which had belonged to his friend Mr. Baynes of Gray's Inn, and that his complaint against Pinkerton was that the latter had printed the poem from a transcript made by a third party many years before, which transcript the gentleman who made it declared he had never considered fit for the press; assuring Ritson, moreover, on his refusal to allow a collation of the original, for which Pinkerton had applied, that the piece should not be printed by the latter at all. Pinkerton, in his Preface, or 'Preliminaries,' (vol. i. p. xxx.) merely says that the poem "was copied many years ago by a learned friend, from a MS. belonging to Mr. Baynes of Gray's Inn, who was a noted collector of romances of chivalry." The MS. afterwards got into the possession of the late Mr. Douce, and is now, with the rest of his collection, in the Bodleian Library. In another place (p. xviii.) Mr. Robson observes, "Sir Walter Scott, where he alludes to this poem in his MINSTRELSY, asserts that it is not prior to the reign of James the Fifth of Scotland; but in his Introduction to SIR TRISTREM he is satisfied that it was written long before the conclusion of the thirteenth century." The passages in which Scott advances these contradictory opinions are in the MINSTRELSY, iv. 147, and SIR TRIETREM, p. 57 (*Poetical Works*, edition 1833).

dewyn of Bretan,' which is here printed for the first time.

#### HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCE.

Although, however, it thus appears that a very considerable body of our early romantic poetry has now been made generally accessible, it is to be observed that only a small proportion of what has been printed is derived from manuscripts of even so early a date as the fourteenth century, and that many of the volumes which have just been enumerated are merely re-impressions of compositions which cannot be traced, at least in the form in which we have them, beyond the sixteenth. Of the undoubted produce of the thirteenth century in this kind of writing we have very little, except the romances of Kyng Horn, Sir Tristrem, Haveloc, and Sir Gawaine, with perhaps two or three others in Ritson and Weber. It is probable, indeed, that many of the manuscripts of later date are substantially transcripts from earlier ones; but in such cases, even when we have the general form of the poems as first written tolerably well preserved, the language is almost always more or less modernized. The history of the English metrical romance appears shortly to be, that at least the first examples of it were translations from the French;—that, if any such were produced so early as before the close of the twelfth century (of which we have no evidence), they were probably designed for the entertainment of the mere commonalty, to whom alone the French language was unknown;—that in the thirteenth century were composed the earliest of those we now possess in their original form;—that in the fourteenth the English took the place of the



French metrical romance with all classes, and that this was the era alike of its highest ascendancy and of its most abundant and felicitous production ;—that in the fifteenth it was supplanted by another species of poetry among the more educated classes, and had also to contend with another rival in the prose romance, but that, nevertheless, it still continued to be produced, although in less quantity and of an inferior fabric,—mostly, indeed, if not exclusively, by the mere modernization of older compositions—for the use of the common people ;—and that it did not altogether cease to be read and written till after the commencement of the sixteenth. From that time the taste for this earliest form of our poetical literature lay asleep in the national heart till it was re-awakened in our own day by Scott, after the lapse of three hundred years. But the metrical romance was then become quite another sort of thing than it had been in its proper era, throughout the whole extent of which, while the story was generally laid in a past age, the manners and state of society described were, notwithstanding, in most respects those of the poet's and of his readers' and hearers' own time. This was strictly the case with the poems of this description which were produced in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries ; and even in those which were accommodated to the popular taste of a later day much more than the language had to be partially modernized to preserve them in favour. When this could no longer be done without too much violence to the composition, or an entire destruction of its original character, the metrical romance lost its hold of the public mind, and was allowed to drop into oblivion. There had been very little of mere anti-

quarianism in the interest it had inspired for three centuries. It had pleased principally as a picture or reflection of manners, usages, and a general spirit of society still existing, or supposed to exist. And this is perhaps the condition upon which any poetry must expect to be extensively and permanently popular. We need not say that the temporary success of the metrical romance, as revived by Scott, was in great part owing to his appeal to quite a different, almost an opposite, state of feeling.

We give no specimens of our early English metrical romances, because no extracts such as we could afford room for from one or two of them could do much, or almost anything, to convey a notion of the general character of these compositions. Although written in verse, they are essentially not so much poems as histories, or narrative works. At least, what poetry is in them lies almost always in the story rather than in anything else. The form of verse is manifestly adopted chiefly as an aid to the memory in their recitation. Even the musical character which the romance poetry is supposed originally to have had, if it ever was attempted to be maintained in long compositions of this description (which it is difficult to believe), appears very early to have been abandoned. Hence, when reading became a more common accomplishment, and recitation fell into comparative disuse, the verse came to be regarded as merely an impediment to the free and easy flow of the story, and was, by general consent, laid aside. Such being the case, it is easy to understand that an old metrical romance is hardly to be better represented by extracts than an architectural structure would be by a bit of one of the walls. Even the more ornamented or animated passages derive

most of their effect from the place they occupy, or the connexion in which they stand with the rest. The only way, therefore, of exhibiting any of these compositions intelligibly or fairly is to print the whole, or at the least, if only portions of the story are produced in the words of the original, to give the rest of it—somewhat abridged, it may be—in modern language. This latter method has been very successfully followed by Ellis in his ‘Specimens,’ which work will be found to take a general survey of nearly the whole field of fiction with which our early English metrical romances are conversant.

Another thing to be observed of these compositions is, that they are in very few cases ascribed to any particular writer. Nor have they, in general, any such peculiarity of style as might mark and distinguish their authorship. A few only may be accounted exceptions—among them the romance of *Tristrem*,—and, if so, we may understand what Robert de Brunne means when he appears to speak of its English as strange and quaint; but usually their style is merely that of the age in which they were written. They differ from one another, in short, rather in the merit of the story itself than by anything in the manner of telling it. The expression and the rhyme are both, for the most part, whatever comes first to hand. The verse, irregular and rugged enough withal, is kept in such shape and order as it has by a crowd of tautologies, expletives, and other blank phrases serviceable only for filling up a gap; and is altogether such verse as might apparently be almost improvised or chaunted extempore. These productions, therefore, are scarcely to be considered as forming any part of our literature, properly so called, interesting as they are on many accounts,—for

the warm and vigorous imagination that often revels in them, for their vivid expression of the feelings and modes of thought of a remote age, for the light they throw upon the history of the national manners and mind, and even of the language in its first rude but bold essays to mimic the solemnities of literary composition.

#### METRICAL CHRONICLE OF ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER.

It may be doubted, however, if any of these metrical romances be really earlier than the versified Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, a narrative of British and English affairs from the time of Brutus to the end of the reign of Henry III., which, from events to which it alludes, must have been written after 1278. All that is known of the author is that he was a monk of the abbey of Gloucester. His Chronicle was printed—"faithfully, I dare say," says Tyrwhitt, "but from incorrect manuscripts"—by Hearne, in 2 vols. 8vo., at Oxford, in 1724; and a re-impression of this edition was produced at London in 1810. The work in the earlier part of it may be considered as a free translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin History; but it is altogether a very rude and lifeless composition. "This rhyming Chronicle," says Warton, "is totally destitute of art or imagination. The author has clothed the fables of Geoffrey of Monmouth in rhyme, which have often a more poetical air in Geoffrey's prose." Tyrwhitt refers to Robert of Gloucester in proof of the fact that the English language had already acquired a strong tincture of French; Warton observes that the language of this writer is full of Saxonisms, and not more easy or intelligible than that of what he calls "the Norman Saxon poems" of Kyng

Horn and others which he believes to belong to the preceding century. Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, as printed, is in long lines of fourteen syllables, which, however, are generally divisible into two of eight and six, and were perhaps intended to be so written and read. The language appears to be marked by the peculiarities of West Country English. Ample specimens of Robert of Gloucester are given by Warton and Ellis; we shall not encumber our limited space with extracts which are recommended by no attraction either in the matter or manner. We will only transcribe, as a sample of the language at the commencement of the reign of Edward I., and for the sake of the curious evidence it supplies in confirmation of a fact to which we have more than once had occasion to draw attention, the short passage about the prevalence of the French tongue in England down even to this date, more than two centuries after the Conquest:—

“ Thus come lo! Engelande into Normannes honde,  
 And the Normans ne couthe speke tho bote her owe speche,  
 And speke French as dude atom, and here chyldren dude  
     al so teche,  
 So that hey men of thys lond, that of her blod come,  
 Holdeth alle thulke speche that hii of hem nome.  
 Vor bote a man couthe French, me tolth of hym well lute;  
 Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss and to her kunde speche  
     yute.  
 Ich wene ther be ne man in world contreyes none  
 That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, but Engeland one.  
 Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,  
 Vor the more that a man con the more worth he ys.”

That is, literally:—Thus, lo! England came into the hand of the Normans; and the Normans could not speak then but their own speech, and spoke French as they

did at home, and their children did all so teach ; so that high men of this land, that of their blood come, retain all the same speech that they of them took. For, unless a man know French, men talk of him little ; and low men hold to English, and to their natural speech yet. I imagine there be no people in any country of the world that do not hold to their natural speech, but in England alone. But well I wot it is well for to know both ; for the more that a man knows, the more worth he is.

ROBERT MANNYNG, OR DE BRUNNE.

Along with this Chronicle may be mentioned the similar performance of Robert Mannyng, otherwise called Robert de Brunne (from his birth-place,\* Brunne, or Bourne, near Deping, or Market Deeping, in Lincolnshire), although it belongs to a date more than half a century later. The work of Robert de Brunne is in two parts, both translated from the French ; the first, coming down to the death of Cadwallader, from Wace's *Brut* ; the second, extending to the death of Edward I., from the French or Romance chronicle written by Piers, or Peter, de Langtoft, a canon regular of St. Austin, at Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who has been mentioned in a former page, and who appears to have lived at the same time with De Brunne. Langtoft, whose chronicle, though it has not been printed, is preserved in more than one manuscript, begins with Brutus ; but De Brunne, for sufficient reasons it is probable, preferred Wace for the earlier portion of the story, and only took to his own

\* See a valuable note on De Brunne in Sir Frederick Madden's 'Havelok,' Introduction, p. 13.

countryman and contemporary when deserted by his elder Norman guide. It is the latter part of his work, however, which, owing to the subject, has been thought most valuable or interesting in modern times; it has been printed by Hearne, under the title of 'Peter Langtoft's Chronicle (as illustrated and improved by Robert of Brunne), from the death of Cadwalader to the end of K. Edward the First's reign; transcribed, and now first published, from a MS. in the Inner Temple Library,' 2 vols. 8vo., Oxford, 1725. This part, like the original French of Langtoft, is in Alexandrine verse of twelve syllables; the earlier part, which remains in manuscript, is in the same octosyllabic verse in which its original, Wace's chronicle, is written. The work is stated to have been finished in 1338. Ritson (*Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 33) is very wroth with Warton for describing De Brunne as having "scarcely more poetry than Robert of Gloucester;"—"which only proves," quoth Ritson, "his want of taste or judgment." It may be admitted that De Brunne's chronicle exhibits the language in a considerably more advanced state than that of Gloucester, and also that he appears to have more natural fluency than his predecessor; his work also possesses greater interest from his occasionally speaking in his own person, and from his more frequent expansion and improvement of his French original by new matter; but for poetry, it would probably require a "taste or judgment" equal to Ritson's own to detect much of it. It is in the Prologue prefixed to the first part of his Chronicle that the famous passage occurs about the romance of Sir Tristrem, its strange or quaint English, and its authors, Thomas and Ercildoune (assumed to be the same per-

son), and Kendale, which has given rise to so much speculation and controversy. De Brunne is also the author of two other rhyming translations; one, of the Latin prose treatise of his contemporary, the Cardinal Bonaventura, 'De Cœna et Passione Domini, et Pœnis S. Mariæ Virginis,' which title he converts into 'Medytaciuns of the Soper of our Lorde Jhesu, and also of his Passyun, and eke of the Peynes of hys swete Modyr mayden Marye;' the other a very free paraphrase of what has commonly been described as the 'Manuel de Péché' (or Manual of Sin) of Bishop Grossthead, but is, in fact, the work with the same title written by William de Wadington.\* Copious extracts from these, and also from other translations of which it is thought that De Brunne may possibly be the author, are given by Warton, who, if he has not sufficiently appreciated the poetical merits of this writer, has at any rate awarded him a space which ought to satisfy his most ardent admirers.†

#### ROLLE, OR HAMPOLE.—DAVIE.

Other obscure writers in verse of the earlier part of the fourteenth century were Richard Rolle, often called Richard of Hampole, or Richard Hampole, a hermit of the order of St. Augustine, who lived in or near the nunnery of Hampole, four miles from Doncaster, and after his death, in 1349, was honoured as a saint, and who is the author, or reputed author, of various metrical paraphrases of parts of Scripture, and other prolix theological effusions, all of which that are preserved (Ritson has enumerated seventeen of them) slumber in manuscript,

\* See *ante*, p. 190; and note by Price to Warton, i. 62.

† Hist. of Eng. Poet., i. pp. 62—103.



and are not likely to be disturbed; and Adam Davie, who rather preceded Rolfe, being reckoned the only poet belonging to the reign of Edward II., and to whom are also attributed a number of religious pieces, preserved only in one manuscript, much damaged, in the Bodleian, besides the metrical romance of the Life of Alexander, of which two copies exist, one in the Bodleian, the other in the library of Lincoln's Inn; but there is every reason for believing that this last-mentioned work, which is printed in Weber's collection under the title of 'Kyng Ali-saunder,' and is one of the most spirited of our early romances, is by another author. There is no ground for assigning it to Davie except the circumstance of the Bodleian copy being bound up with his Visions, Legends, Scripture Histories, and other much more pious than poetical lucubrations; and its style is as little in his way as its subject.

## LAWRENCE MINOT.

Putting aside the authors of some of the best of the early metrical romances, whose names are generally or universally unknown, perhaps the earliest writer of English verse who deserves the name of a poet is Lawrence Minot, who lived and wrote about the middle of the fourteenth century, and of the reign of Edward III. His ten poems in celebration of the battles and victories of that king, preserved in the Cotton MS., Galba E. ix., which the old catalogue had described as a manuscript of Chaucer, the compiler having been misled by the name of some former proprietor, *Richard Chawfer*, inscribed on the volume, were discovered by Tyrwhitt while collecting materials for his edition of the *Canterbury*

Tales, in a note to the 'Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer' prefixed to which work their existence was first mentioned. This was in 1775. In 1781 some specimens of them were given (out of their chronological place) by Warton in the third volume of his *History of Poetry*. Finally, in 1796, the whole were published by Ritson under the title of 'Poems written anno MCCCLII., by Lawrence Minot; with Introductory Dissertations on the Scottish Wars of Edward III., on his claim to the throne of France, and Notes and Glossary,' 8vo., London; and a reprint of this volume appeared in 1825. Of the 250 pages, or thereby, of which it consists, only about 50 are occupied by the poems, which are only ten in number, their subjects being the Battle of Halidon Hill (fought 1333); the Battle of Bannockburn (1314), or rather the manner in which that defeat, sustained by his father, had been avenged by Edward III.; Edward's first Invasion of France (1339); the Sea-fight in the Swine, or Zwin\* (1340); the Siege of Tournay (the same year); the Landing of the English King at La Hogue, on his Expedition in 1346; the Siege of Calais (the same year); the Battle of Neville's Cross (the same year); the Sea-fight with the Spaniards off Winchelsea (1350); and the Taking of Guisnes (1352). It is from this last date that Ritson, somewhat unwarrantably, assumes that all the poems were written in that year. As they are very various in their form and manner, it is more probable that they were produced as the occasions of them arose, and therefore that they ought rather to be assigned to the

\* To the south of the Isle of Cadsand, at the mouth of the West Schelde.

interval between 1333 and 1352. They are remarkable, if not for any poetical qualities of a high order, yet for a precision and selectness, as well as a force, of expression, previously, as far as is known, unexampled in English verse. There is a fine martial tone and spirit too in them, which reminds us of the best of our old heroic ballads, while it is better sustained, and accompanied with more refinement of style, than it usually is in these popular and anonymous compositions. As a sample we will transcribe the one on Edward's first expedition to France, omitting a prologue, which is in a different measure, and modernising the spelling where it does not affect the rhyme or rhythm :—

Edward, owré comely king,  
 In Brabànd has his woning<sup>a</sup>  
 With many comely knight ;  
 And in that land, truely to tell,  
 Ordains he still for to dwell  
 To time<sup>b</sup> he think to fight.

Now God, that is of mightés mast,<sup>c</sup>  
 Grant him grace of the Holy Ghast  
 His heritage to win ;  
 And Mary Moder, of mercy free,  
 Save our king and his mený<sup>d</sup>  
 Fro sorrow, shame, and sin.

Thus in Braband has he been,  
 Where he before was seldom seen  
 For to prove their japes ;<sup>e</sup>  
 Now no langer will he spare,  
 P'ot unto France fast will he fare  
 To comfort him with grapes.

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Dwelling.      <sup>b</sup> Till the time.      <sup>c</sup> Most of might.  
<sup>d</sup> Followers.      <sup>e</sup> Jeers.

Furth he fared into France;  
 God save him fro mischance,  
 And all his company!  
 The noble Duke of Brabant  
 With him went into that land,  
 Ready to live or die.

Then the rich flower de lice<sup>f</sup>  
 Wan there full little price;  
 Fast he fled for feard:  
 The right heir of that countree  
 Is comen,<sup>g</sup> with all his knight's free,  
 To shake him by the beard.

Sir Philip the Valays<sup>h</sup>  
 Wit his men in tho days  
 To battle had he thought:<sup>i</sup>  
 He bade his men them purvey  
 Withouten langer delay;  
 But he ne held it nought.

He brought folk full great won,<sup>j</sup>  
 Aye seven agains<sup>k</sup> one,  
 That full well weaponed were,  
 Bot soon when he heard ascry<sup>l</sup>  
 That king Edward was near thereby,  
 Then durst he nought come near.

In that morning fell a mist,  
 And when our Englishmen it wist,  
 It changed all their cheer;  
 Our king unto God made his boon,<sup>m</sup>  
 And God sent him good comfort soon;  
 The weader wex full clear.

<sup>f</sup> Fleur de lis.

<sup>g</sup> Come.

<sup>h</sup> Philip VI. de Valois, king of France.

<sup>i</sup> The meaning seems to be, "informed his men in those days that he had a design to fight." Unless, indeed, *wit* be a mistranscription of *with*.

<sup>j</sup> Number.

<sup>k</sup> Against.

<sup>l</sup> Report.

<sup>m</sup> Prayer, request.—*Rits*. Perhaps, rather, vow or *bond*.

Our king and his men held the field  
 Stalworthly with spear and shield,  
 And thought to win his right;  
 With lordés and with knightés keen,  
 And other doughty men bydeen <sup>u</sup>  
 That war full frek <sup>o</sup> to fight.

When Sir Philip of France heard tell  
 That king Edward in field wald <sup>p</sup> dwell,  
 Then gained him no glee: <sup>q</sup>  
 He traisted of no better boot, <sup>r</sup>  
 Bot both on horse and on foot  
 He hasted him to flee.

It seemed he was feared for strokes  
 When he did fell his greaté oaks  
 About <sup>s</sup> his pavilioùn;  
 Abated was then all his pride,  
 For langer there durst he nought bide;  
 His boast was brought all down.

The king of Beme <sup>t</sup> had cares cold,  
 That was full hardy and bold  
 A steed to umstride: <sup>u</sup>  
 He and the king als <sup>v</sup> of Naverne <sup>w</sup>  
 War fair feared <sup>x</sup> in the fern  
 Their hevids <sup>y</sup> for to hide.

And levés <sup>z</sup> well it is no lie,  
 And field hat <sup>a</sup> Flemangry <sup>b</sup>  
 That king Edward was in,

<sup>u</sup> Perhaps "besides." The word is of common occurrence, but of doubtful or various meaning.

<sup>o</sup> Were full eager. <sup>p</sup> Would.

<sup>q</sup> The meaning seems to be, "then no glee, or joy, was given him" (*accessit ei*).

<sup>r</sup> He trusted in no better expedient, or alternative.

<sup>s</sup> About. <sup>t</sup> Bohemia. <sup>u</sup> Bestride. <sup>v</sup> Also.

<sup>w</sup> Navarre. <sup>x</sup> Were fairly frightened.

<sup>y</sup> Heads. <sup>z</sup> Believe. <sup>a</sup> Was called.

<sup>b</sup> The village of La Flamengrie.

With princes that were stiff and bold,  
 And dukés that were doughty told <sup>c</sup>  
 In battle to begin.

The princes that were rich on raw <sup>d</sup>  
 Gert <sup>e</sup> nakers <sup>f</sup> strike, and trumpés blaw,  
 And made mirth at their might,  
 Both alblast <sup>g</sup> and many a bow  
 War ready railed <sup>h</sup> upon a row,  
 And full frek for to fight.

Gladly they gave meat and drink,  
 So that they suld the better swink, <sup>i</sup>  
 The wight <sup>j</sup> men that there were.  
 Sir Philip of France fled for doubt,  
 And hied him hame with all his rout :  
 Coward ! God give him care !

For there then had the lily flower  
 Lorn all halely <sup>k</sup> his honour,  
 That so gat fled <sup>l</sup> for feard ;  
 Bot our king Edward come full still <sup>m</sup>  
 When that he trowed no harm him till, <sup>n</sup>  
 And keeped him in the beard. <sup>o</sup>

ALLITERATIVE VERSE.—PIERS PLOUGHMAN.

It may be observed that these verses are thickly sprinkled with what is called *alliteration*, or the repetition of words having the same commencing letter, either immediately after one another, or with the intervention only of one or two other words generally unemphatic or

<sup>c</sup> Reckoned.

<sup>d</sup> Apparently, "arranged richly clad in a row."

<sup>e</sup> Caused. <sup>f</sup> Tymbals. <sup>g</sup> Arblast, or crossbow.

<sup>h</sup> Placed. <sup>i</sup> Should the better labour.

<sup>j</sup> Stout. <sup>k</sup> Lost wholly. <sup>l</sup> Got put to flight ?

<sup>m</sup> Came back quietly at his ease.

<sup>n</sup> When he perceived there was no harm intended him.

<sup>o</sup> Perhaps, "kept his beard untouched."

of subordinate importance. Alliteration, which we find here combined with rhyme, was in an earlier stage of our poetry employed, more systematically, as the substitute for that decoration—the recurrence, at certain regular intervals, of like beginnings, serving the same purpose which is now accomplished by what Milton has contemptuously called “the jingling sound of like endings.” To the Anglo-Saxons rhyme was unknown, and their verse appears to have been constructed wholly upon the principle of alliteration. Hence, naturally, even after we had borrowed the practice of rhyme from the French or Romance writers, our early English poetry retained something of its original habit; and, as in Minot, we have rhyme and a liberal use of alliteration subsisting together. At this date, in fact, the difficulty probably would have been to avoid alliteration in writing verse; all the old customary phrasologies of poetry had been constructed upon that principle; and indeed alliterative expression has in every age, and in many other languages as well as our own, had a charm for the popular ear, so that it has always largely prevailed in proverbs and other such traditional forms of words, nor is it yet altogether discarded as an occasional embellishment of composition, whether in verse or in prose. But there is one poetical work of the fourteenth century, of considerable extent, and in some respects of remarkable merit, in which the verse is without rhyme, and is constructed upon a system of alliteration as constantly observed as in the Anglo-Saxon poetry. This is the famous ‘Vision of Piers Ploughman,’ or, as the subject is expressed at full length in the Latin title, ‘Visio Willielmi de Petro Plouhman,’ that is, ‘The Vision of William concerning Piers or Peter

Ploughman.' The manuscripts of this poem, which long continued to enjoy a high popularity, are very numerous, and it has also been repeatedly printed: first in 1550, at London, by Robert Crowley, "dwellyng in Elye rentes in Holburne," who appears to have produced three successive impressions of it in the same year; next in 1561, by Owen Rogers, "dwellyng neare unto great Saint Bartelmewes gate, at the sygne of the Spred Egle;" then in 1813, under the superintendence of the late Thomas Dunham Whitaker, LL.D.; lastly, in 1842, under the care of Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.R.S., &c. The early editions, and also Dr. Whitaker's, are in quarto and in black letter. Mr. Wright's is in the common type, and in the much more commodious form of two volumes duodecimo; and, furnished as it is with an introduction, notes, and a glossary, all very carefully and learnedly compiled, is as superior in all other respects as it is in cheapness and convenience for perusal to Dr. Whitaker's costly and cumbrous publication. Whitaker, moreover, whose acquirements in this department of study were very slender, has selected a text widely differing from the common one, and which has evidently no claim to the preference with which he has honoured it; that given by Mr. Wright (who has added in the notes the most important of the variations exhibited by Dr. Whitaker's edition) differs very little, except in greater accuracy, from that first printed by Crowley, while it is derived from what appears to be "the best and oldest manuscript now in existence." Dr. Whitaker's notes and glossary are contemptible; and his running paraphrase, which accompanies the text, will be found much more frequently to slur over, when it does not mistake,



the obscure passages of the original, than to explain, or attempt to explain, them.

Of the author of 'Piers Ploughman' scarcely anything is known. He has commonly been called Robert Langland; but there are grounds for believing that his Christian name was William, and it is probable that it is himself of whom he speaks under that name throughout his work. He is supposed to have been a monk, and he seems to have resided in the West of England, near the Malvern Hills, where he introduces himself at the commencement of his poem as falling asleep "on a May morwenynge," and entering upon his dreams or visions. The date may be pretty nearly fixed. In one place is an allusion to the treaty of Bretigny made with France in 1360, and to the military disasters of the previous year which led to it; in another passage mention is made of a remarkable tempest which occurred on the 15th of January, 1362, as of a recent event. "It is probable," to quote Mr. Wright, "that the poem of Piers Ploughman was composed in the latter part of this year, when the effects of the great wind were fresh in people's memory, and when the treaty of Bretigny had become a subject of popular discontent."\* We may assume, at least, that it was in hand at this time.

We cannot attempt an analysis of the work. It consists, in Mr. Wright's edition, where the long line of the other editions is divided into two, of 14,696 verses, distributed into twenty sections, or *Passus*, as they are called. Each *passus* forms, or professes to form, a separate vision; and so inartificial or confused is the connexion of the

\* Introduction, p. xii.

several parts of the composition (notwithstanding Dr. Whitaker's notion that it had in his edition "for the first time been shown that it was written after a regular and consistent plan"), that it may be regarded as being in reality not so much one poem as a succession of poems. The general subject may be said to be the same with that of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the exposition of the impediments and temptations which beset the crusade of this our mortal life; and the method, too, like Bunyan's, is the allegorical; but the spirit of the poetry is not so much picturesque, or even descriptive, as satirical. Vices and abuses of all sorts come in for their share of the exposure and invective; but the main attack throughout is directed against the corruptions of the church, and the hypocrisy and worldliness, the ignorance, indolence, and sensuality, of the ecclesiastical order. To this favourite theme the author constantly returns with new affection and sharper zest from any less high matter which he may occasionally take up. Hence it has been commonly assumed that he must have himself belonged to the ecclesiastical profession, that he was probably a priest or monk. And his *Vision* has been regarded not only as mainly a religious poem, but as almost a puritanical and Protestant work, although produced nearly two centuries before either Protestantism or Puritanism was ever heard of. In this notion, as we have seen, it was brought into such repute at the time of the Reformation that three editions of it were printed in one year. There is nothing, however, of anti-Romanism, properly so called, in Langland, either doctrinal or constitutional; and even the anti-clerical spirit of his poetry is not more decided than what is found in the writings of Chaucer, and the other popular litera-

ture of the time. In all ages, indeed, it is the tendency of popular literature to erect itself into a power adverse to that of the priesthood, as has been evinced more especially by the poetical literature of modern Europe from the days of the Provençal troubadours. In the *Canterbury Tales*, however, and in most other works where this spirit appears, the puritanism (if so it is to be called) is merely one of the forms of the poetry; in *Piers Ploughman* the poetry is principally a form or expression of the puritanism.

The rhythm or measure of the verse in this poem must be considered as accentual rather than syllabical—that is to say, it depends rather upon the number of the accents than of the syllables. This is, perhaps, the original principle of all verse; and it still remains the leading principle in various kinds of verse, both in our own and in other languages. At first, probably, only the accented syllables were counted, or reckoned of any rhythmical value; other syllables upon which there was no emphasis went for nothing, and might be introduced in any part of the verse, one, two, or three at a time, as the poet chose. Of course it would at all times be felt that there were limits beyond which this licence could not be carried without destroying or injuring the metrical character of the composition; but these limits would not at first be fixed as they now for the most part are. The elementary form of the verse in ‘*Piers Ploughman*’ demands a succession of four accented syllables—two in the first hemistich or short line, and two in the second; but, while each of those in the first line is usually preceded by either one or two unaccented syllables, commonly only one of those in the second line is so preceded. The second line,

therefore, is for the most part shorter than the first. And they also differ in regard to the alliteration : it being required that in the first both the accented or emphatic syllables, which are generally initial syllables, should begin with the same letter, but that in the second only the first accented syllable should begin with that letter. This is the general rule ; but, either from the text being corrupt or from the irregularity of the composition, the exceptions are very numerous.\* We may merely add, that, although in our extracts we shall for the convenience of printing, and for the greater intelligibility, follow Mr. Wright's edition, as in other respects, so in the bisection of the long line of the manuscripts and the other editions into two short ones, only marking the distinction between the first and second, which he does not, we suspect that the true prosody requires these short lines to be regarded rather as hemistichs than as entire verses, and sometimes only as false hemistichs—that is to say, that the correct prosodical division would be, not in all cases where he has placed it, but occasionally in the middle of the word with which he closes his first line. But this is a matter of very little moment. We shall adopt the plan of modernizing the spelling in all cases in which there can be no doubt that the pronunciation is not thereby affected.

The poem begins as follows :—

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\* Mr. Wright observes that, when alliterative poetry was written in the fifteenth century, the writers, instead of three, “ not unfrequently inserted four or five alliterative words in the same [long] line, which would certainly have been considered a defect in the earlier writers.” But this defect, if it be one, is very frequent in *Piers Ploughman*. It occurs, for instance, in the two commencing lines of the poem, at least as printed in Mr. Wright's edition.

In a summer season,  
 When soft was the sun,  
 I shoop me into shrowds <sup>a</sup>  
 As I a sheep <sup>b</sup> were;  
 In habit as an hermit  
 Unholy of werkes,<sup>c</sup>  
 Went wide in this world  
 Wonders to hear;  
 Ac <sup>d</sup> on a May morwening  
 On Malvern hills  
 Me befel a ferly,<sup>e</sup>  
 Of fairy me thought.  
 I was weary for-wandered,<sup>f</sup>  
 And went me to rest  
 Under a brood <sup>g</sup> bank,  
 By a burn's <sup>h</sup> side;  
 And as I lay and leaned,  
 And looked on the waters,  
 I slombered into a sleeping,  
 It swayed so mury.<sup>i</sup>  
 Then gan I meten <sup>j</sup>  
 A marvellous sweven,<sup>k</sup>  
 That I was in a wilderness,  
 Wist I never where;  
 And, as I beheld into the east  
 On high to the sun,  
 I seigh <sup>l</sup> a tower on a toft <sup>m</sup>  
 Frieliche ymaked,<sup>n</sup>  
 A deep dale beneath,  
 A donjon therein,  
 With deep ditches and darke,  
 And dreadful of sight.

<sup>a</sup> I put myself into clothes. <sup>b</sup> A shepherd.

<sup>c</sup> Whitaker's interpretation is, "in habit, not like an anchorite who keeps his cell, but like one of those unholy hermits who wander about the world to see and hear wonders." He reads, "That went forth in the world," &c.

<sup>d</sup> And. <sup>e</sup> Wonder.

<sup>f</sup> Worn out with wandering. <sup>g</sup> Broad.

<sup>h</sup> Stream's. <sup>i</sup> It sounded so pleasant. <sup>j</sup> Meet.

<sup>k</sup> Dream. <sup>l</sup> Saw. <sup>m</sup> An elevated ground.

<sup>n</sup> Handsomely built.

A fair field full of folk  
 Found I there between,  
 Of all manner of men,  
 The mean and the rich,  
 Werking<sup>o</sup> and wandering  
 As the world asketh.  
 Some putten hem<sup>p</sup> to the plough,  
 Playden full seld,<sup>q</sup>  
 In setting and sowing  
 Swonken<sup>r</sup> full hard,  
 And wonnen that wasters  
 With gluttony destroyeth.<sup>s</sup>  
 And some putten hem to pride,  
 Apparelled hem thereafter,  
 In countenance of clothing  
 Comen disguised,<sup>t</sup>  
 In prayers and penances  
 Putten hem many,<sup>u</sup>  
 All for the love of our Lord  
 Liveden full strait,<sup>v</sup>  
 In hope to have after  
 Heaven-riche bliss;<sup>w</sup>  
 As anchors and heremites<sup>x</sup>  
 That holden hem in hir<sup>y</sup> cells,  
 And coveten nought in country  
 To carryen about,  
 For no likerous liflode  
 Hir likame to please.<sup>z</sup>  
 And some chosen chaffer:<sup>a</sup>  
 They cheveden<sup>b</sup> the better,

<sup>o</sup> Working.      <sup>p</sup> Put them.      <sup>q</sup> Played full seldom.

<sup>r</sup> Laboured.

<sup>s</sup> Wan that which wasters with gluttony destroy.

<sup>t</sup> Came disguised. Whitaker reads, "In countenance and in clothing."

<sup>u</sup> Many put them, applied themselves to, engaged in.

<sup>v</sup> Lived full strictly.

<sup>w</sup> The bliss of the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>x</sup> Anchorites and eremites or hermits.

<sup>y</sup> Hold them in their.

<sup>z</sup> By no likerous living their body to please.

<sup>a</sup> Merchandise.

<sup>b</sup> Achieved their end.

As it seemeth to our sight  
 That swich men thrive.<sup>c</sup>  
 And some murths to make  
 As minstralles con,<sup>d</sup>  
 And geten gold with hir glee,<sup>e</sup>  
 Guiltless, I lieve.<sup>f</sup>  
 Ac japers and jaugellers &  
 Judas' children,  
 Feignen hem fantasies  
 And fools hem maketh,  
 And han hir<sup>h</sup> wit at will  
 To werken if they wold.  
 That Poul preacheth of hem  
 I wol nat preve<sup>i</sup> it here:  
 But *qui loquitur turpiloquium*<sup>j</sup>  
 Is Jupiter's hine.<sup>k</sup>  
 Bidders<sup>l</sup> and beggars  
 Fast about yede,<sup>m</sup>  
 With hir bellies and hir bags  
 Of bread full y-crammed,  
 Faiteden<sup>n</sup> for hir food,  
 Foughten at the ale:  
 In gluttony, God wot,  
 Go they to bed,  
 And risen with ribaudry,<sup>o</sup>  
 Tho Roberd's knaves;<sup>p</sup>  
 Sleep and sorry slewth<sup>q</sup>  
 Sueth<sup>r</sup> hem ever.

---

<sup>c</sup> That such men thrive.

<sup>d</sup> And some are skilled to make mirths, or amusements, as minstrels.

<sup>e</sup> And get gold with their minstrelsy.

<sup>f</sup> Believe.    <sup>g</sup> But jesters and jugglers.    <sup>h</sup> Have their.

<sup>i</sup> Will not prove.    <sup>j</sup> Whoso speaketh ribaldry.

<sup>k</sup> Perhaps *hind*, or servant.    <sup>l</sup> Petitioners.    <sup>m</sup> Went.

<sup>n</sup> Flattered.    <sup>o</sup> Rise with ribaldry.

<sup>p</sup> Those Robertsmen—a class of malefactors mentioned in several statutes of the fourteenth century. The name may have meant originally Robin Hood's men, as Whitaker conjectures.

<sup>q</sup> Sloth.

<sup>r</sup> Pursue.

Pilgrims and palmers  
 Plighten hem togider <sup>s</sup>  
 For to seeken Saint Jame  
 And saintes at Rome :  
 They wenten forth in hir way<sup>t</sup>  
 With many wise tales,  
 And hadden leave to lien <sup>u</sup>  
 All hir life after.  
 I seigh some that seiden <sup>v</sup>  
 They had y-sought saints :  
 To each a tale that they told  
 Hir tongue was tempered to lie <sup>w</sup>  
 More than to say sooth,  
 It seemed by hir speech.  
 Hermits on an heap,<sup>x</sup>  
 With hooked staves,  
 Wenten to Walsingham,  
 And hir wenches after ;  
 Great loobies and long,  
 That loth were to swink,<sup>y</sup>  
 Clothed hem in copes  
 To be knownen from other,  
 And shopen hem <sup>z</sup> hermits  
 Hir ease to have.  
 I found there freres,  
 All the four orders,  
 Preaching the people  
 For profit of hem selve :  
 Glosed the gospel  
 As hem good liked ; <sup>a</sup>  
 For covetise of copes <sup>b</sup>  
 Construed it as they would.  
 Many of these master freres  
 Now clothen hem at liking <sup>c</sup>

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<sup>s</sup> Gather them together.

<sup>t</sup> They went forth on their way.

<sup>u</sup> To lie.

<sup>v</sup> I saw some that said.

<sup>w</sup> In every tale that they told their tongue was trained to lie.

<sup>x</sup> In a crowd.

<sup>y</sup> Labour.

<sup>z</sup> Made themselves.

<sup>a</sup> As it seemed to them good.

<sup>b</sup> Covetousness of copes or rich clothing.

<sup>c</sup> Clothe themselves to their liking.



For hir money and hir merchandize  
 Marchen togeders.  
 For sith charity hath been chapman,  
 And chief to shrive lords,  
 Many ferlies han fallen <sup>c</sup>  
 In a few years :  
 But holy church and hi <sup>d</sup>  
 Hold better togeders,  
 The most mischief on mould <sup>e</sup>  
 Is mounting well fast.  
 There preached a pardoner,  
 As he a priest were ;  
 Brought forth a bull  
 With many bishops' seals,  
 And said that himself might  
 Assoilen hem all,  
 Of falsehede of fasting, <sup>f</sup>  
 Of avowes y-broken.  
 Lewed & men leved <sup>h</sup> it well,  
 And liked his words ;  
 Comen up kneeling  
 To kissen his bulls :  
 He bouched <sup>i</sup> hem with his brevet, <sup>j</sup>  
 And bleared hir eyen, <sup>k</sup>  
 And raught with his ragman <sup>l</sup>  
 Ringes and brooches.

Here, it will be admitted, we have both a well-filled  
 canvass and a picture with a good deal of life and stir in  
 it. The satiric touches are also natural and effective ;  
 and the expression clear, easy, and not deficient in vigour.  
 We will now present a portion of the Fifth Passus, which  
 commences thus :—

<sup>c</sup> Many wonders have happened.

<sup>d</sup> Unless holy church and they.

<sup>e</sup> The greatest mischief on earth.

<sup>f</sup> Of breaking fast-days.      <sup>g</sup> Ignorant.      <sup>h</sup> Loved.

<sup>i</sup> Stopped their mouths.      <sup>j</sup> Little brief.

<sup>k</sup> Bedimmed their eyes.

<sup>l</sup> Reached, drew in, with his catalogue or roll of names ?

The king and his knights  
 To the kirk went,  
 To hear matins of the day,  
 And the mass after.  
 Then waked I of my winking,  
 And wo was withal  
 That I ne had slept sadder <sup>a</sup>  
 And y-seighen <sup>b</sup> more.  
 Ac ere I had faren <sup>c</sup> a furlong  
 Faintise me hent, <sup>d</sup>  
 That I ne might ferther a foot  
 For de-faut of sleeping,  
 And sat softly adown,  
 And said my believe,  
 And so I babbled on my beads,  
 They brought me asleep.  
 And then saw I much more  
 Than I before of told;  
 For I seigh the field full of folk  
 That I before of said,  
 And how Reason gan arrayen him  
 All the reaum to preach, <sup>e</sup>  
 And with a cross afore the king  
 Comsed <sup>f</sup> thus to teachen:—  
 He preved that these pestilences <sup>g</sup>  
 Were for pure sin,  
 And the south-western wind  
 On Saturday at even <sup>h</sup>  
 Was pertlich i for pure pride,  
 And for no point else.  
 Pyries <sup>i</sup> and plum-trees  
 Were puffed to the earth,  
 In ensample that the segges <sup>k</sup>  
 Sholden do the better;

<sup>a</sup> Sounder.<sup>b</sup> Seen.<sup>c</sup> But ere I had walked.<sup>d</sup> Faintness seized me.<sup>e</sup> To preach to all the realm.<sup>f</sup> Commenced.

<sup>g</sup> The three great pestilences which desolated England and the rest of Europe in the reign of Edward III. occurred in 1348-1349, 1361-1362, and 1369.

<sup>h</sup> The great tempest of Saturday, Jan. 15, 1362.<sup>i</sup> Manifestly.<sup>j</sup> Pear-trees.<sup>k</sup> Men, people.

Beeches and broad oaks  
 Were blowen to the ground,  
 Turned upward hir tails,  
 In tokening of dread  
 That deadly sin ere doomsday  
 Shall for-done <sup>1</sup> hem all.

The account of Reason's sermon is continued at great length; after which the repentance of his auditors is narrated as follows:—

Pernel Proudheart  
 Plat her <sup>a</sup> to the earth,  
 And lay long ere she loked,  
 And "Lord, Mercy," cried,  
 And bi-highte <sup>b</sup> to him  
 That us all made  
 She should unsowen her serk <sup>c</sup>  
 And set there an hair,  
 To affaiten <sup>d</sup> her flesh,  
 That fierce was to sin.

Envy with heavy heart  
 Asked after shrift,  
 And carefully *mea culpa*  
 He comsed <sup>e</sup> to shew.  
 He was as pale as a pellet,<sup>f</sup>  
 In the palsy he seemed;  
 And clothed jn a kaury maury<sup>g</sup>  
 I couth it nought describe,  
 In kirtle and courtepy,<sup>h</sup>  
 And a knife by his side;  
 Of a frere's frock  
 Were the fore-sleeves;  
 And as a leek that had y-lay  
 Long in the sun,  
 So looked he with lean cheeks  
 Lowering foul.

<sup>1</sup> Undo, ruin.

<sup>c</sup> Shirt.

<sup>f</sup> Snowball?

<sup>a</sup> Threw herself down.

<sup>d</sup> Tame.

<sup>g</sup> Unknown.

<sup>b</sup> Promised.

<sup>e</sup> Commenced.

<sup>h</sup> A short coat.

His body was to-bollen<sup>i</sup> for wrath  
 That he boot<sup>j</sup> his lips ;  
 And wringing he yede<sup>k</sup> with the fust ;<sup>l</sup>  
 To wreaken himself he thought  
 With werks or with words  
 When he seigh his time.  
 Each a werd that he warp<sup>m</sup>  
 Was of a nedder's<sup>n</sup> tongue ;  
 Of chiding and of chalenging  
 Was his chief liflode ;<sup>o</sup>  
 With backbiting and bismear<sup>p</sup>  
 And bearing of false witness.  
 " I wold been y-shrive," quod this shrew.  
 " And<sup>q</sup> I for shame durst ;  
 I wold be gladder, by God,  
 That Gib had mischance  
 Than though I had this wouk<sup>r</sup> y-won  
 A wey<sup>s</sup> of Essex cheese.  
 I have a neighbour by me ;  
 I have annoyed him oft,  
 And lowen<sup>t</sup> on him to lords  
 To doon him lese his silver,<sup>u</sup>  
 And made his friends be his foon<sup>v</sup>  
 Thorough my false tongue :  
 His grace and his good haps  
 Grieven me full sore.  
 Between many and many  
 I make debate oft,  
 That both life and limb  
 Is lost thorough my speech.  
 And when I meet him in market  
 That I most hate,  
 I hailse him hendly<sup>w</sup>  
 As I his friend were ;  
 For<sup>x</sup> he is doughtier than I

---

<sup>i</sup> Was ready to burst.      <sup>j</sup> Bit.      <sup>k</sup> Went.

<sup>l</sup> Fist.      <sup>m</sup> Each word that he uttered.

<sup>n</sup> An adder's.      <sup>o</sup> Livelihood.      <sup>p</sup> Reproach, besmearing.

<sup>q</sup> If, an.      <sup>r</sup> Week.      <sup>s</sup> 256 pounds.

<sup>t</sup> Lied ?      <sup>u</sup> To make him lose his money.      <sup>v</sup> Foes.

<sup>w</sup> I salute him politely.      <sup>x</sup> Because.

I dare do none other ;  
 Ac<sup>y</sup> had I mastery and might  
 God wot my will !  
 And when I come to the kirk,  
 And should kneel to the rood,  
 And pray for the people  
 As the priest teacheth,  
 For pilgrims and for palmers,  
 For all the people after,  
 Then I cry on my knees  
 That Christ give hem sorrow  
 That bearen away my boll  
 And my broke shete.<sup>z</sup>  
 Away fro the auter<sup>a</sup> then  
 Turn I mine eyen,  
 And behold Ellen  
 Hath a new coat :  
 I wish then it were mine,  
 And all the web after.  
 And of men's lesing<sup>b</sup> I laugh ;  
 That liketh mine heart :  
 And for hir winning I weep,  
 And wail the time,  
 And deem that they doon ill  
 There I do well werse.<sup>c</sup>  
 Whoso under-nymeth<sup>d</sup> me hereof,  
 I hate him deadly after.  
 I wold that each a wight  
 Were my knave ;<sup>e</sup>  
 For whoso hath more than I,  
 That angereth me sore.  
 And thus I live loveless,  
 Like a luther<sup>f</sup> dog,

---

<sup>y</sup> But.

<sup>z</sup> That bore away my bowl and my *brook* or *broken* sheet ?

<sup>a</sup> Altar.

<sup>b</sup> Losing.

<sup>c</sup> The meaning is not clear. Perhaps the *ill* and *well* should be transposed. "There" seems to be *where*.

<sup>d</sup> Mr. Wright translates *undertakes*, *takes possession of*. But this seems to give no meaning.

<sup>e</sup> Servant.

<sup>f</sup> Vicious.

That all my body bolneth <sup>g</sup>  
 For bitter of my gall.  
 I might nought eat many years  
 As a man ought,  
 For envy and evil will  
 Is evil <sup>h</sup> to defy.  
 May no sugar nor sweet thing  
 Assuage my swelling?  
 Ne no *diapenidion* <sup>i</sup>  
 Drive it fro mine heart?  
 Ne neither shrift ne shame,  
 But whoso shrape <sup>j</sup> my maw?"  
 "Yes, readily," quod Repentance,  
 And rad him to the best; <sup>k</sup>  
 "Sorrow of sins  
 Is salvation of souls."  
 "I am sorry," quod that segge; <sup>l</sup>  
 I am but seld other; <sup>m</sup>  
 And that maketh me thus meagre  
 For <sup>n</sup> I ne may me venge.  
 Amonges burgesses have I be  
 Dwelling at London,  
 And gart <sup>o</sup> backbiting be a broker  
 To blame men's ware:  
 When he sold and I nought,  
 Then was I ready  
 To lie and to lower on my neighbour,  
 And to lack his chaffer. <sup>p</sup>  
 I woll amend this if I may,  
 Thorough might of God Almighty."

The cases of Wrath, Covetousness, Gluttony, and Sloth, follow at equal or greater length; and then comes the passage in which Piers Ploughman is first mentioned. The people having been persuaded by the exhortations of Repentance and Hope to set out in quest of Truth,

<sup>g</sup> Swelleth.                      <sup>h</sup> Ill.                      <sup>i</sup> Unknown.

<sup>j</sup> Unless one should scrape.

<sup>k</sup> Counsell'd him for the best.

<sup>l</sup> Man.

<sup>m</sup> I am seldom otherwise.

<sup>n</sup> Because.

<sup>o</sup> Caused.

<sup>p</sup> To disparage his merchandise.

A thousand of men tho <sup>a</sup>  
 Thrungen togeders,  
 Cried upward to Christ,  
 And to his clean moder,  
 To have grace to go with them  
 Truthe to seek.  
 Ac <sup>b</sup> there was wight none so wise  
 The way thider couth,<sup>c</sup>  
 But blustreden <sup>d</sup> forth as beasts  
 Over bankes and hills;  
 Till late was and long  
 That they a leed <sup>e</sup> met,  
 Apparelled as a paynim  
 In pilgrimes' wise.  
 He bar a burden y-bound  
 With a broad list,  
 In a with-wind wise <sup>f</sup>  
 Y-wounden about;  
 A bowl and a bag  
 He bar by his side,  
 And hundred of ampuls <sup>g</sup>  
 On his hat setten,  
 Signs of Sinai,  
 And shells of Galice,  
 And many a crouch <sup>h</sup> on his cloak,  
 And keyes of Rome,  
 And the Vernicle <sup>i</sup> before,  
 For <sup>j</sup> men shold know  
 And see by his signs  
 Whom he sought had.  
 The folk frayned <sup>k</sup> him first  
 Fro whennes he come.  
 "From Sinai," he said,  
 "And from our Lord's sepulchre:  
 In Bethlem and in Babiloyn,  
 I have been in both;

<sup>a</sup> Then.<sup>b</sup> But.<sup>c</sup> Knew.<sup>d</sup> Wandered along aimlessly.<sup>e</sup> Person.<sup>f</sup> Withy-wand-wise.<sup>g</sup> *Ampullæ*, small vessels of holy water or oil?<sup>h</sup> Cross.<sup>i</sup> The Veronica, or miraculous picture of Christ.<sup>j</sup> In order that.<sup>k</sup> Questioned.

In Armony <sup>l</sup> and Alisandre,  
 In many other places.  
 Ye may see by my signs,  
 That sitten on mine hat,  
 That I have walked full wide  
 In weet and in dry,  
 And sought good saints  
 For my soul's health."  
 " Knowestow aught a corsaint <sup>m</sup>  
 That men call Truth?  
 Coudestow aught wissen us the way <sup>n</sup>  
 Where that wye <sup>o</sup> dwelleth?"  
 " Nay, so me God help,"  
 Said the gome <sup>p</sup> then,  
 " I seigh never palmer  
 With pike ne with scrip  
 Asken after him ere  
 Till now in this place."

Then the narrative goes on, as printed and pointed by Mr. Wright, who has no note upon the passage—

" Peter," quod a ploughman,  
 And put forth his head,  
 " I know him as kindly  
 As clerk doth his bookes:  
 Conscience and kind <sup>q</sup> wit  
 Kenned <sup>r</sup> me to his place,  
 And diden me suren him sickerly <sup>s</sup>  
 To serven him for ever,  
 Both to sow and to set  
 The while I swink <sup>t</sup> might.  
 I have been his follower  
 All this fifty winter,

<sup>l</sup> Armenia.

<sup>m</sup> Knowest thou of any relic.

<sup>n</sup> Coudest thou tell us aught of the way.

<sup>o</sup> Man.

<sup>p</sup> Man.

<sup>q</sup> Natural.

<sup>r</sup> Showed.

<sup>s</sup> The expression seems confused, and is perhaps corrupt: the meaning is obviously, " And did determine or fix me securely." The *him* seems superfluous.

<sup>t</sup> Labour.



Both y-sowen <sup>u</sup> his seed  
 And sued <sup>v</sup> his beasts,  
 Within and withouten  
 Waited his profit.  
 I dig and I delve,  
 I do that Truth hoteth :<sup>w</sup>  
 Some time I sow  
 And sometime I thresh ;  
 In tailors' craft and tinkers' craft  
 What Truth can devise ;  
 I weave and I wind  
 And do what Truth hoteth," &c.

It is difficult to understand what meaning we are to give to the word "Peter," understood as part of the Ploughman's speech. Whitaker's interpretation is "one Peter, a ploughman, now put forth his head ;" and in a note upon the passage, which in his edition occurs in the eighth *passus*, and stands "Peter quoth a Ploughman," he says, "As Piers Ploughman, who now first appears, is evidently the speaker, we must, notwithstanding the arrangement of the words, understand them to mean, 'Quoth Peter a ploughman.'" But it is evident that this sense cannot be got out of the words as they stand.\*

---

<sup>u</sup> Sowed.    <sup>v</sup> Tended.    <sup>w</sup> Ordereth.

\* From its position the word *Peter* would almost seem to be nothing more than an exclamation. It does not appear to have been noticed that we have the same form of expression in two passages of Chaucer's 'House of Fame;' in Book II. l. 526, where, to the question of the eagle,

"And what sown is it like? quod he,"

the author answers,

"Peter! like the beating of the sea,  
 Quod I, against the roches halow :"—

and again in Book III., l. 910, where it is used by the eagle

The line is possibly corrupt; and indeed the whole passage, though one on which so much of the structure of the poem hinges, exhibits other traces of having suffered from the carelessness or ignorance of the transcribers. It differs widely throughout in the two editions. But everything relating to the personage from whom the work takes its name seems to be designedly involved in confusion and obscurity. The Ploughman ends his speech, of which we have quoted the commencement, by telling his auditors that, if they wish to know where Truth dwells, he is ready to show them the way to his residence; upon which, proceeds the story,

“Yea, leve <sup>a</sup> Piers,” quod these pilgrims,  
 And proffered him hire,  
 For to wend with hem  
 To Truth’s dwelling-place.  
 “Nay, by my soul’s help,” <sup>b</sup> quod Piers,  
 And gan for to swear,  
 I nold fang a ferthing,  
 For Saint Thomas’ shrine; <sup>c</sup>

in addressing the author (elsewhere called Geoffrey, see II. 221)—

“Peter! that is now mine intent,  
 Quod he to me.”

Perhaps “Peter! quod a Ploughman” means no more than what we find a few pages after:—

“Quod Perkin the Ploughman,  
 By Saint Peter of Rome!”—l. 3799.

Besides, the Ploughman, we believe, is never afterwards called *Peter*; but always either *Piers* or *Perkin*.

<sup>a</sup> Dear.

<sup>b</sup> Should not this be *helth*, or *health*? The Saxon character for *th* is very apt to be mistaken for a *p*.

<sup>c</sup> I would not take a farthing, if you were to offer me all the wealth of St. Thomas’s shrine.

Truth wold love me the lass<sup>d</sup>  
 A long time thereafter.  
 Ac if you wilneth to wend well<sup>e</sup>  
 This is the way thider:—  
 Ye moten<sup>f</sup> go thorough Meekness,  
 Both men and wives,  
 Till ye come into Conscience," &c.

The personage who thus speaks is afterwards constantly designated Piers, or sometimes Perkin, the Ploughman, and he makes a considerable figure throughout the sixth and seventh *Passus*; after which we hear little more of him till we come to the sixteenth. In the eighteenth *Passus* "the character of Piers the Ploughman," according to Mr. Wright's view (Introduction, p. xxiv.), "is identified with that of the Saviour." Whitaker, who generally calls him "the mysterious personage," conceives (Introductory Discourse, p. xxviii.) that Piers in the latter part of the poem is intended to be the representative of the Church. Taking the church as meaning, not the clergy or the ecclesiastical system, but the body of the faithful, it would not perhaps be impossible to understand Piers as sustaining that character throughout the work.

#### PIERS PLOUGHMAN'S CREED.

The popularity of Langland's poem appears to have brought alliterative verse into fashion again even for poems of considerable length; several romances were written in it, such as that of 'William and the Werwolf,' that of 'Alexander,' that of 'Jerusalem,' and others; and the use of it was continued throughout the greater part of the fifteenth century. But the most remarkable imitation

<sup>d</sup> Less.

<sup>e</sup> But if you wish to go well.

<sup>f</sup> Must.

of the 'Vision' is the poem entitled 'Piers the Ploughman's Creed,' which appears to have been written about the end of the fourteenth century: it was first printed separately at London, in 4to. by Reynold Wolfe, in 1553; then by Rogers, along with the 'Vision,' in 1561; then, separately, in 1814, as a companion to Whitaker's edition of the 'Vision;' and, lastly, along with the 'Vision,' in Mr. Wright's edition of 1842. The Creed is the composition of a follower of Wyclif, and an avowed opponent of Romanism. Here, Mr. Wright observes, "Piers Ploughman is no longer an allegorical personage: he is the simple representative of the peasant rising up to judge and act for himself—the English *sans-culotte* of the fourteenth century, if we may be allowed the comparison." The satire, or invective, in this effusion (which consists only of 1697 short lines), is directed altogether against the clergy, and especially the monks or friars; and Piers or Peter is represented as a poor ploughman from whom the writer receives that instruction in Christian truth which he had sought for in vain from every order of these licensed teachers. The language is quite as antique as that of the 'Vision,' as may appear from the following passage, in which Piers is introduced:—

Then turned I me forth,  
And talked to myself  
Of the falsehede of this folk,  
How faithless they weren.  
And as I went by the way  
Weeping for sorrow,  
I see a seely<sup>a</sup> man me by  
Opon the plough hongē.<sup>b</sup>

---

<sup>a</sup> Simple.

<sup>b</sup> Hung.

His coat was of a clout <sup>c</sup>  
 That cary <sup>d</sup> was y-called;  
 His hood was full of holes,  
 And his hair out;  
 With his knopped shoon <sup>e</sup>  
 Clouted full thick,  
 His ton <sup>f</sup> toteden <sup>g</sup> out  
 As he the lond treaded:  
 His hosen overhongen his hoc-shynes <sup>h</sup>  
 On everich a side,  
 All beslomered <sup>i</sup> in fen <sup>j</sup>  
 As he the plough followed.  
 Twey <sup>k</sup> mittens as meter <sup>l</sup>  
 Made all of clouts,  
 The fingers weren for-weard <sup>m</sup>  
 And full of fen honged.  
 This whit <sup>n</sup> wasled <sup>o</sup> in the feen <sup>p</sup>  
 Almost to the ancle;  
 Four rotheren <sup>q</sup> him beforne,  
 That feeble were worthy;  
 Men might reckon each a rib <sup>s</sup>  
 So rentful <sup>t</sup> they weren.  
 His wife walked him with,  
 With a long goad,  
 In a cutted coat  
 Cutted full high,  
 Wrapped in a winnow <sup>u</sup> sheet  
 To wearen her fro weders,

<sup>c</sup> Cloth.<sup>d</sup> Unknown.<sup>e</sup> Knobbed shoes.<sup>f</sup> Toes.<sup>g</sup> Peeped.

<sup>h</sup> Neither of Mr. Wright's explanations seems quite satisfactory: "crooked shins;" or "the shin towards the *hock* or ankle?"

<sup>i</sup> Bedaubed.<sup>j</sup> Mud.<sup>k</sup> Two.

<sup>l</sup> Mr. Wright suggests *fitter*; which does not seem to make sense.

<sup>m</sup> Were worn out.<sup>n</sup> Wight.<sup>o</sup> Dirtied himself.<sup>p</sup> Fen, mud.<sup>q</sup> Oxen (the Four Evangelists).<sup>r</sup> Become?<sup>s</sup> Each rib.<sup>t</sup> Meagre?<sup>u</sup> Winnowing.

<sup>v</sup> The meaning seems to be, "to protect her from the weather."



## N O T I C E.

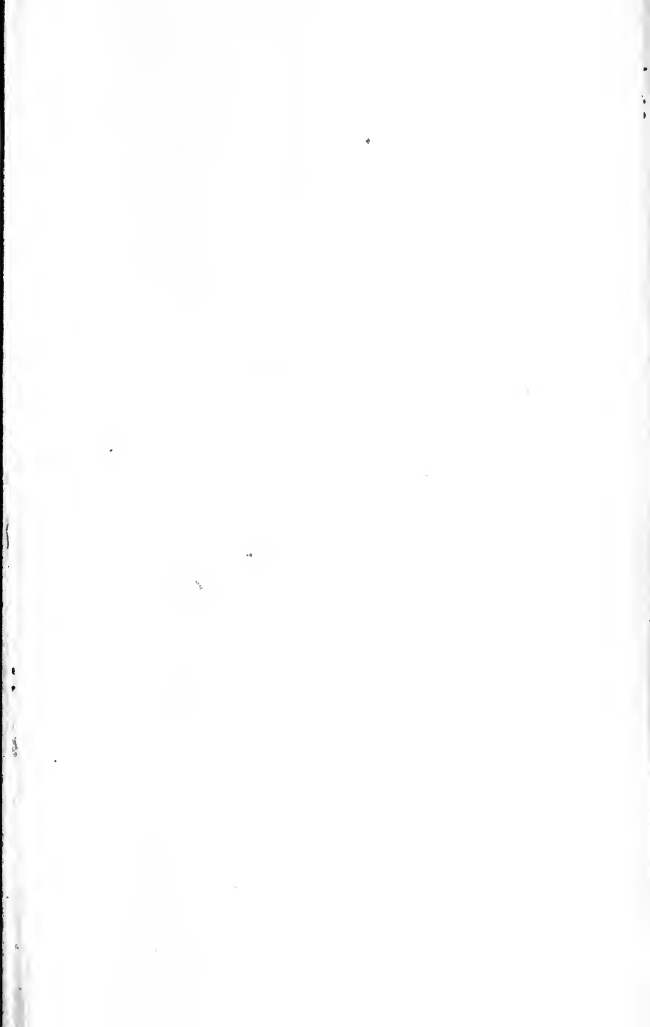
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